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# **SOCIAL WORKERS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SOCIAL MEDIA**

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## **Abstract**

The research found a clear picture of Finnish social workers relations with the social media are very much inadequate and insufficient. The 'fear', 'negative media' feedback, 'erotic' nature of social media, 'typical Finnish' social worker, and big question of 'privacy' and lack of awareness are the responsible factors behind the situation. Social workers 'positive' image can be improved with the closer engagement in the social media platforms. This will help to increase the effectiveness of social work practice and improve the client's wellbeing. For this, a proper guideline of social media use for the professionals is necessary.

The purpose of the study was to find out the relationships among the social media and the social work profession and how those are connected with the client's wellbeing. Social constructionist theory used as a theoretical perspective.

The interviews and online questionnaire used for data collection and analyzed using content analysis method. In the present context of information society, social workers need to use social media extensively to reduce the 'stereotyped' and 'negative' media image. Social workers in Finland are also global social worker, because social work profession is global.

The contents starts explaining the technology and social media connectivity and its relation with social work. After this the research process and results of the study analyzed. Later it emphasized on the social construction of media knowledge. Theoretical remarks and discussion are followed by the recommendation and future research at the end.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Social work practice, Communication, Social work, Media, Social work in Finland

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## 1 Introduction

The story of an old lady. She is from the Lapland, the north of Finland. During my working time with her as a personal assistant, I have got an interesting aspect of social media engagement and 'happiness'. The lady was around 57 year's age, retired due to serious sickness. Here, the interesting part is, even though her situation is like that, she has her own time in Social media. In a social networking site she is continuously involved and has quite good number of followers. She has a different name there, but otherwise everything is about her real life. I was quite impressed to know how people want to be connected in a network, with other people. For me, it was an inspiring thought to think about my research, where I could find out this 'virtual' reality. I felt that it is the happiness when you find yourself in a network and where people are interested in your thoughts, opinions, and needs. Absence of physical appearance is the exclusion, social media don't agree with this.

How many of us even remember that when actually the social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blogs have become an integral part of our daily routine! How fast digital technologies are changing our surroundings and contexts. Now it feels like the childhood memories, when some time I was feeling like I knew the person though we didn't meet before. The bonding of human relationship in terms of connectivity is so strange that it's shaping our world now with the 'invisible' nature. Network of people and their relations are constructing the social, cultural, political and other aspects of our everyday life.

Changes in the technology and the advancement of new technological tools are influencing the society dramatically. Technological innovations are continuously developing with a higher speed. It is so hard to find every single day without a new innovation in the technological tools. New wave of technological developments are shaping the way of communication, social interaction processes. In this complex process of human interaction is also giving a light of new identity formation during the social interaction and understanding the relations. To find the relations between the social workers and the social media as well as communication technology, it is necessary to understand it more.

The nature and practice of social work and practices are strongly influencing the effectiveness of services. Nowadays, the techno-friendly society and social relationship, virtual reality made it way further to think about the resources, service, effectiveness, practices and well-being of people. In Finland, the social welfare instruments are also modifying to reach to the clients without any discrimination of race, gender, age and other situations. In this regard, technology and social media tools are playing a vital role.

The socio-technical relations are influencing the social work profession in a diverse way. Technology and its 'social' use is yet further continue towards a new social world. As Irving (1994) cited in McDonald (2006,27) argued that science became the founding complex of beliefs of capitalism, and the power of reason and rationality gradually developed a stranglehold on the human imagination, extending from the natural world to the social world. Slowly, we became convinced that better and more advanced expressions of human life could be promoted in a social world shaped by human intervention through the application of social technologies.

This study reflects the views of digital communication and new media/social media in relations with the society. As we see that social work profession is facing a new challenge, due to the digital media centered communication technology. In fact, we cannot escape from the communication as a social being, as individual as a social worker or in any other identity. According to Fuchs (2014, 242), communication is an essential feature of human society. There can be no society without communication; human create and maintain social relationships by communication and thereby continuously reproduce their social existence. Media, such as the internet, are a means of communication. They are tools that enable the production of communication and human sociality. Means of communication, like nature, education, love, care, knowledge, technology, affects, entertainment, language, transportation, housing, food, cities, cultural goods and traditions etc.

Identifying and understanding of social media relations with social worker in different forms explained as the connectivity influencing the professional social work and constructing new reality. As we see, Payne (2005,164) pointed out that the social construction theory proposes that people describe, explain and account for the world around them as part of interchanges between people in their social, cultural and historical context.

The negative and random discussions in the social media channels which are mostly wrongly interpreting the professional social work and social workers, are big concern. The reason behind the low user percentage of social workers use is the insecurity and random incorrect, faulty information in the media. The respondents emphasized that in the social media, people are blaming the social workers for any kind of services, which is absurd. According to some social workers, there is no reason to use those social media channels for information. Those information there are misleading. Some of the social workers views that as the fear of being harmed. Because in the social media channels, it's quite easy to identify the place, position and the other information of social workers if they use the social media on their own identity. One of the reason of negative image of social workers in media is that the

newspapers are more interested in ‘bad news’ (Hall et al 2006, 146). Because of this trend the stories about social work most of the time reflects the misleading image of social work profession. Hall et al (ibid) citing Kitzinger (1996) mentioned that journalists are not in the business of faithfully recording the most common events, they are in the business of finding, constructing and selling ‘news’ in a particular way.

The social workers interaction with the public is very much necessary. The world of media perception cannot be changed unless the active participation and role of social workers in the media. As Niven (2014) argued that we need a sea change in how we interact through the media with the public. He emphasized on the active representation and said that the media is the big window for all the people for information, opinions and debates. It is at the same time for the social workers too.

Here in this research, social workers relation with the technology is emphasized. In particular, the engagement with the social media in knowledge and practices is the focus of the exploration. The discussion will follow the connectivity and the development of digital tools and social media, understanding social media relations and its impact in our individual, social and professional life. As the discussion continues, the use of social media and digital technology will get closer with the social work and social work profession. In every stage of the texts below, the connectivity, and new knowledge and meanings of social relationships are emphasized as according to the theoretical perspective of social construction.

When i started my master’s degree in ‘Comparative Social Work’ here in the University of Lapland, i thought to do my master’s thesis with some issues reflecting social media. In my very first lesson in this university, this was my answer when i was asked what i will select as the topic for master's thesis. You can guess that, it was not definitely a planned answer. Because i had another topic selected for my master’s thesis, which wasn’t saying much about social media. Then after few months i have found out that interest and personal knowledge is quite important to choose and conduct any kind of research. And, now i realize that the selection of this social media was the right choice. In this issue, my reason was to find out something new in Finnish social work. I have found that the area of social media and its huge opportunities are neglected in Finnish social work.

In the professional practice, the use of new technological tools in communication and the possibilities to influence the society, politics, policies, profession was missing. As a social work student and future social worker, i felt to do something, which is possible for me. Of course, there are different good examples of social media use by the social workers in Finland. First, those are not enough and secondly, there is so few studies done in English.

Simultaneously, the context of international social work practices related with social media is not visible. These issues pushed me to take a challenge for this research.

After the introduction, in chapter 2, the new information society and the communication technology is explained. The relation of technology in our everyday life as well as its impact in society pointed out here. It is also includes the connectivity and development of digital media tools and its relation with the social work profession as well. As the main area of study, the social media and its diverse relationship as an individual, social work professional described. In this chapter, social media and social work concepts are explained in the context of Finland and Finnish social work. Chapter 3 is structured with the detail about the whole research process. It describes the purposes of the study and data collection, analysis and challenges as well. In this chapter and also in other part of the research, some resources used in particular, different part of the research includes secondary sources of Manuel Castells, Christian Fuchs. I have found their contribution in the network society, connectivity and social media and social relations are quite significant and more relevant for this study.

Chapter 4 is the explanations of research data in three main category. Chapter 5 explains the social constructionist approach as the theoretical part of the study. It has the issues of social media, technology and the relationship all these issues influencing the new knowledge. The interactions among the individuals in the online sphere, and the use of digital tools are explained with the theoretical knowledge. The new knowledge's are making new meaning of 'social' relationships and social work profession revealed according to the constructionist perspective. After this, the theoretical remarks and the discussion part in the chapter 6 which follows the last chapter of recommendation and future research prospects at the end.

Before continuing to the main chapters, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor emeritus Kyösti Urponen, for his excellent support and valuable remarks for this hard task as I was in the middle stage of my thesis when he started to guide me as a new supervisor. At the same time I am very much thankful to my previous supervisor Professor Tarja Orjasniemi. It would not be possible to continue without her inspiration and all-out support to continue the thesis. Both of my supervisors close supervision helped me to improve the research work and complete this thesis. And, this research would not be possible without the help of social workers who responded the questionnaire despite their busy work schedule. Special thanks to all of them. I am also especially thankful to the University of Lapland, for offering me the excellent study environment and I am indebted for this opportunity.



## 2 New Information society

We are in different social connection due to our own perception of connectivity and the mind that ensures social and mental bonding with other person. It's a social bond which satisfies us for our actions to continue the relations and social interaction. Technology is bringing people together and a social world is created in that space. Chayko (2002, 32) argues that when people socio mentally connect, they share an 'understood' environment that can be neither imagined nor created by a single individual acting alone. This is the 'place' where one might 'go' when one's mind focuses on, thinks about, and understands things 'in concert' with at least one other person-where a sense of proximity with another person might come to feel especially strong, or where a distant loved one might feel or seem to be near.

The dynamic changes in social interaction and the communications are pointed out in different researches. New social order and culture of network are the place where new social networks are developing. One of the prominent network and communication expert, Castells (2014) defines the phenomena as living in a new social structure, the global network society. While discussing about the IT and its impact on practical life, Heeks (2002, 17) argued that in theory, everything that IT can do could be done by the some other means. In practice, its ability to increase the speed and/or reduce the cost of information tasks mean it can do things that would not otherwise be contemplated. As we are living in the information age we need to restructure the systems for sustainable development. To utilize the resources and ensuring the much greater benefit of the people and, businesses and organizations are important to consider.

The development of technology and communication tools can be understood with the study of network. The evolution and dramatic development all are made by the power of network. As Castells (2004,6) defined the information age and argued that at the core of the technological change that unleashed the power of networks was the transformation of information and communication technologies, based on the microelectronics revolution that took place in the 1940s and 190s. It constituted the foundation of a new technological paradigm, consolidated in the 1970s, mainly in the United States, and rapidly diffused throughout the world, ushering in what i have characterized, descriptively, as the information age. In his opinion, the changes of information age and the technology is informationalism.

While explaining the information technology and online community Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons (2002) cited in Perron et al (2010, 68) argues that with the growth of the Internet, a wide range of ICTs have transformed social relationships, education, and the dissemination of information. It is argued that online relationships can have properties of

intimacy, richness, and liberation that rival or exceed offline relationships, as online relationships tend to be based more on mutual interest rather than physical proximity.

## **2.1 Connectivity and information**

Time has a significant effect on the development of network. The changes of time and social production of influenced the social production of time and the ages of changes. Emphasizing on time Hassan (2002, 46) argues that the global digital network is alive. Literally, it lives and breathes and thinks and acts and reacts. He explained that it works furiously, at a breakneck pace, or cruises at a more manageable speed, stopping to check, to rest, to reflect, to leap forward or step back. It is alive because the network is you; it is us. It is everyone who operates a connectable device or uses a connected service or process.

Sometime exclusion is also a factor regarding the social media and technology. Non-use of technologies can become a hindrance for the elderly, remote area people in different aspects. As Talsi (2014, 77) argued that the non-use of social media can also exclude people from a social environment and social relationships. About the structural development of technology and information communication Steinfield and Salvaggio outlined several steps from different perspective. As Dizard (1984) cited in Steinfield and Salvaggio (2013, 7) mentioned that it was sensitive to the social, economic, and political realities surrounding the diffusion of computer and communication technologies. However, he also viewed the information society primarily in terms of the spread of communications networks and information machines. First, the technological infrastructure is created by both large firms and small innovative companies. Then, all segments of the economy and government become dependent on information technology and communications networks. In the final stage, the mass consumerization of information technologies and services affords all a lifetime access to information.

Communication and its importance are explained by many experts. Fuchs (2014, 242) argued that communication is an essential feature of human society. There can be no society without communication; human create and maintain social relationships by communication and thereby continuously reproduce their social existence. Media, such as the internet, are a means of communication. They are tools that enable the production of communication and human sociality. Means of communication, like nature, education, love, care, knowledge, technology, affects, entertainment, language, transportation, housing, food, cities, cultural goods and traditions etc.

## 2.2 Impact of internet and technology

Interaction with the use of new technological tools became more easily nowadays. The use of new communication technology made the network of sharing thoughts, views and work more efficiently due to easy access of information. As Perron et al (2010, 69) argued that computer technology is becoming more efficient, productive, and cheaper. Advances in technology are producing more powerful computing devices to create a dynamic virtual network that allows people all over the world to communicate and share information with each other.

While pointing out about the power and communication Castells (2009) cited in Castells (2014) argues that the Power and counter power, the foundational relationships of society, are constructed in the human mind, through the construction of meaning and the processing of information according to certain sets of values and interests. Technology is also a great factor of social movements where internet and communication played the vital role. Here, about the network formation and defining the involvements of society, Van Dijk (2006, 31) argued that the social and media networks in contemporary society increasingly create small worlds and clusters in such a way that any pair of individuals or organizations can be connected via a short chain of intermediaries. This leads to statements, almost platitudes in the meantime, that we live in a connected world and that society is ever more connected. In short, that it is becoming a network society.

Chayko (2002, 37) argued that socio mental connections are made possible by technological mediation and the perception of phenomena by socially structured minds that 'meet' in socio mental space. Castells (2004,41) mentioned that what is specific is that, on the basis of a new technological paradigm (Informationalism), a new social structure emerged, a structure made up of electronic communication technologies- powered, social networks.

It's not only the effective communication which are changing by the online network, the society and its shape is also developing in a new form. According to Williams and Edge (1996,893) here, it could be argued, the social shaping of technology or SST perspective, by demonstrating the social malleability of perhaps the most concrete and apparently impersonal products of social processes (technology) and the lack of any clear boundary between the 'technical' and the 'social', has drawn attention to the need to reconsider other aspects of social activity that appeared stable and bounded - such as the traditional distinctions between economic, social and political processes. (For example, work that has sought to integrate 'sociological' and economic accounts of innovation which has led to a reconceptualization of markets as socially constructed.) As Castells (2014) argues that it's not true that the people use internet and engaged in online communities are non-social. He says,

in fact, available evidence shows that there is either no relationship or a positive cumulative relationship between the Internet use and the intensity of sociability.

### **2.3 Online society and the social work**

The changes of information technology and social media tools created a new door for the professionals. In social work profession and the social work practice also influenced by the rapid changes of internet and new media. The governing bodies of social work organizations also pointed out the new changes in the society inclined by new media and technology. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Association of Social Work Boards published set of guidelines about the social media use is social work professionals. (NASW, 2005).

The rise of connectivity in the network society has both social and technological reasons. In the network society, social relations become increasingly interactive by the combination of social and media networks with multilateral communication. Compared to the ‘mass society’ with its one-way media and centralized institutions, the media and organizations of the network society tend to be more interactive and decentralized. (Van Dijk, 2006, 39.)

The new dimension of the internet and information communication development is the interactive face of new media technologies, which is ‘social’ due to its multiple roles. In this regard, Fuchs (2010) argues that a central characteristic of networked digital media is that the consumer of knowledge has the potential to become its producer. As Castells (2014) argues that any process of major technological change generates its own mythology. In part because it comes into practice before scientists can assess its effects and implications, so there is always a gap between social change and its understanding. For instance, media often report that intense use of the Internet increases the risk of alienation, isolation, depression, and withdrawal from society.

The production process of knowledge is social and a common process and it is appropriated by the capital, argued by Fuchs (2010). Castells (2014) opined network society is a self-constructed society by networking connecting to other networks. Here, Social aspects of online network explained with participatory process and human interactions. According to Van Dijk (2013) cited in Fuchs (2014) the very word ‘social’ associated with media implies that platforms are user centered and that they facilitate communal activities, just as the term ‘participatory’ emphasizes human collaboration. Indeed, social media can be seen as online

facilitators or enhancers of human networks-webs of people that promote connectedness as a social value. So, it's not all about the non-social activity in online community or network society.

The work of government is thus very information intensive and four main types of formal information are identifiable. Given this information intensity, changes in information systems must be an essential part of all reform initiatives. If information runs through everything that government does, then changing anything in government must mean changing information, which must mean changing information systems. (Heeks 2002, 17.) We can consider it thinking to implement a technology friendly environment in different organizations and other institutions to change and adopt the new shape of social work profession.

### **3 Understanding Social media**

What is ‘now’ here, it is ‘now’ in everywhere? If we think of a happening in New York, it is same time becomes a happening in the very remote area of Africa or somewhere else in the world. Due to the ‘sharing’ and connectivity whatever happens, is shared, and experienced at the same time. The user generated media or social media is faster than the traditional media because it is ‘easy to use’ (Shao 2008). Time, gender, class, statuses becomes less important or not important at all for this bridging human beings of different geographical area. For example, the disaster earthquake in Nepal, it felt and sympathized the people of other countries at the same time, it experienced in Nepal.

A place for networked people irrespective of their presence and sharing the views, opinions and many more things happens in social media platforms. Social media is defined as web 2.0 also which brings the technologies under a single roof for a more effective interaction among the users of those technologies. Koch et al (2008) cited in Treem (2015) mentioned that Social media—a class of technologies that commonly includes blogs, wikis, social networking sites, microblogs, and social tagging—are often grouped together in research studies under the moniker Web 2.0.

In respect of emergence of social media, some others also have the same view as them. According to Matthew Allen (2012) and Trebor Scholz (2008) cited in Fuchs (2014,34) argued that social media applications are not new and that their origins can be traced back to years earlier than 2005. Blogs were already around at the end of the 1990s, the wiki technology was suggested by Ward Cynningham in 1994 and first released in 1995, social networking sites already existed in 1995 (Classmates) and in 1997 (Sixdegrees), Google was founded in 1999.

According to McAfee (2009) cited in Treem (2015) Web 2.0 applications as platforms that enable free and easy interaction, lack imposed structure such as a formal workflow, and allow structure to emerge through networked connections. He coined the phrase “Enterprise 2.0,” which he defined as “the use of emergent social software platforms by organizations in pursuit of their goals. The information consumption and the consuming aspect of user generated media is becoming more light, bright, digestible ‘snack food’ (Shao 2008) so that the users can get it more easily and faster.

#### **3.1 Easy to use**

The easy and quick way to know, produce contents and share makes the entire social media as a faster place for the distribution of knowledge, ideas, thoughts, campaigns, movements

and so on. It does create more space to become more 'social' or in other way, more connected.

While according to Shao (2008) the user generated media platforms audience attraction is dependent on 'easy to use' feature. He pointed out that no matter what people do, such as consuming, participating, or producing, they can do it easily. The users of those platforms can get more information by communicating and participating. At the same time they get more control on their actions as a user. In this context he also mentioned that Users control what they want, when they want, and where they want. In other words, users are not constrained by the computer systems. Such control appeals to people not only technically but also psychologically.

Social media with its inclusive and exclusive connectivity, targets the human beings wherever they are. What actually the social media technologies are constructed of and how do they connect people, could be understood from experts point of views. The very reason of engagement or participation is the crucial part of the inter connectivity in social media. O According to O'Reilly (2005b) cited in Fuchs (2014, 32), this connectivity is the 'architecture of participation'. As he mentioned that Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation', and going beyond the page metaphor of web 1.0 to deliver rich user experience.

### **3.2 Social interaction**

The social process is emphasized in the media relations. Fuchs (2014, 38) argues that all media and all software are social in the sense that they are products of social processes. Human in social relations produce them. They objectify knowledge that is produced in society, applied and used in social systems. Applying Durkheim's idea of social facts to computing means that all software applications and media are social because social structures are fixed and objectified in them.

At the same time there are some arguments that social media or the Web 2.0 is not the new platform. These were also in the previous years but people were not using those for the purpose of connectivity and interaction among themselves, which became a common

scenario nowadays. It is argued that the usage was not clear to the people back in 1990s though the technology was there.

However, the effectiveness and also the necessity for the better performance in individual and in the organizational level are becoming important day by day. In every aspect, the communication, accountability, transparency and uninterrupted flow of information is necessary everywhere. In this social media technologies became powerful. Shirky (2008,20f) cited in Fuchs (2014,35) argued that Social media and social software are tools that ‘increase our ability to share to cooperate, with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutional institutions and organizations’.

Social scientists pointed out the social aspect and the human social activity in different perspective. As Fuchs (2014, 42) argues that different social facts related with the social media are the model of human social activity. He argued that from the three viewpoint of sociality (Durkheim’s social facts, Weber’s social actions/relations, Marx’s and Tönnies’ co-operation) Hofkirchner (2013) integrated as a model of human social activity. Hofkirchner (2013) cited in Fuchs (2014) argued that it is based on the assumption that knowledge is a threefold dynamic process of cognition, communication and cooperation.

Here, the social media technologies accountability and interaction is argued by different experts. According to Brown & Lightfoot (2002) cited in Treem (2015) also mentioned that the Communication technologies can both support interaction that serves to create this sense of accountability for users while also affording individuals the opportunity to provide, or avoid, accounts through interaction. Treem (ibid) citing Crawford (2009) again argued that the potential accountability associated with social media use is captured in Crawford’s call to view behaviors of those observing online contributions as “listening” instead of “lurking” to reflect the active process through which users seek and derive meaning from the social media activity of others. In these ways, social media interactions also makes the way to ensure accountability in the usage of the technologies.

### **3.3 Participatory role**

Finland has a very well structure for the technological communication and the use of technology in different services are quite common. The use of internet based communication and new media is remarkable when it comes about the public interaction and engagement of people in social media platforms. According to the latest Global Information technology report (2015), in Finland the usage of virtual social networking site is promising and the overall rank is 18 among the 148 participating countries in the report.



The power of participation and making own opinions noticed is a common strength of the users of social media technologies, which we say the user generated content. The best part of the social media platforms. According to Fuchs (2010, 192) argued that with the rise of user-generated content, free access social networking platforms, and other free access platforms that yield profit by online advertisement—a development subsumed under categories such as web 2.0, social software, and social networking sites for a theoretical discussion of the notions of web 2.0 and social software)—the Web seems to come close to accumulation strategies employed by the capital on traditional mass media like TV or radio.

Jenkins (2008) cited in Fuchs (2014, 54) opined that the social media has been seen as a place and expression of ‘participatory culture’. Due to its nature of wider participation and communication, social media opens door always for the professionals as well. While, Shao (2008) argued that the content production in the social media reflects the identity of the users in certain user generated media platforms. He argued that people produce their own contents on user-generated sites for self-expression and self-actualization, both of which may ultimately be aimed at constructing their own identity.

Technology and the new communication tools are also a part of our different activities and in the socio economic status we find it as a commodity like other things we produce, distribute and consume. There are different thoughts about the commodity aspect of media and power of economy and control. In the business of in the communication perspectives and usage of the social media is dominated by different tools of digital communication processes. Social media is termed as the buzzwords by Boyd (2009) cited in Fuchs (2014,36) and argued that argues that buzzwords are reflected in interactions in the digital media platforms. There are the opinions about the economical perspective of social media. Technology and the new communication tools are also a part of our different activities and in the socio economic status we find it as a commodity like other things we produce, distribute and consume.

About the commodity aspects of media and power control, Chayko (2002,128) mentioned that though there are hazards to consider, there are benefits as well, and sometimes, there are effects that cannot so easily be designated ‘good’ or ‘bad’. At the same time as physical presence becomes less of an imperative for conducting business, it remains a critical component of strong families, while its role in education is debated, for new applications of computer technologies have made inroads into all of the institutions of modern life.

### 3.4 Attention economy

The corporate structure and in the development of technology social media and digital technological tools became a medium to channelize the information's. Due to the spread of capital and other consumer oriented industry and business, social media is also a big interest of corporate world. Apart from the marketing and corporate interest, the use of social media became significant in academics, entertainment as well. We could say, in the modern society it is in everywhere surrounding us, where the frequency of use and particular tools are different. Castells (2004,9) mentioned that the digital electronics technologies allow for a historically unprecedented increase in the capacity to process information, not only in the volume of information, but in the complexity of the operations involved, and in the speed of processing, including the speed of communication.

When you have certain information and you just want to share it with some other, then it becomes quite easier to do in internet. Due to the rapid advancement of information technology and the digital media tools it is easier now. In the social media platforms it is quicker, spontaneous. Because of easier communication, the attention about anything working faster than ever in social media. The opportunity of getting attention and the economy of attention, surrounding social media is also gaining more appreciation. In this regard, Goldhaber (1997) argued that the main goal of attention economy is that to get enough or much more attention, as much as possible. He mentioned that if you have a person's full attention, you can get them to perform physical acts, ranging from moving their eyes to follow you, to raising their hands, to applauding, to bringing you a glass of water, to handing you a sandwich, or, as is not uncommon in the case of rock groupies or sports fans, having sex with you (to cite a notorious example). He opined that just as a parent paying attention to a child fills its material wants and desires, so a fan, that is anyone paying attention can feel an obligation or a desire to do the same for whomever they are paying attention to.

Individual behaviors relating to the engagement with the user generated media is linked with self-expression. Shao (2008) mentioned that the self-expression can be achieved through such online behaviors as blogging and video casting. He further explains that it is not only allows the significance of who one is and what one does to show himself/herself, but also enables one to control the impressions others have of him/her. In addition to self-expression, people's producing activity is also driven by self-actualization, which is reflected in such goals of online producing as seeking recognition, fame, or personal efficacy.

While talking about social media use in the Academic arena, Mewburn and Thomson (2013) argues that Blogging is now part of a complex online 'attention economy'

where social media like Twitter and Facebook are not merely dumb ‘echo chambers’ but a massive global conversation which can help your work travel much further than you might initially think. The media and the diverse ways of influences of life, whether it’s the social work or the clients, people in general are also going in process of new socio-technological phase. The market economy, changing society, economy and choices are also associated with the attention economy. As Shao (2008) citing Simon (1971) mentioned that we have entered into an attention economy, where a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information and entertainment sources that might consume it. By simplifying systems’ usability, maximizing people’s utility, and giving people multiple controls, UGM (user generated media) have been at the cutting edge to help people allot their attention efficiently and thus give people great gratification.

As we see there are many more people using social media and technological tools in their everyday life. There are the individuals, groups who are not using it. This creating a gap of service users. It is also making difference regarding the service delivery and production. The non-user group like elderly, technologically inactive or non-interested people have the difficult issues of using technology. There are some arguments as well. As Talsi (2014) argued about the problem of marginalized group of ICT and social media use. She says that the ‘Scary and unknown entity- a black box. The diverse way of communication and choices of people concerning the service is necessary to be taken into consideration. Attention of those people about the technology and social media is significant like the active users of technology friendly society.

### **3.5 Social Capital**

As in social media platforms and all media, the corporatization and influence of capital is the central issue, it has effect on the behavior of the people, using those media platform. Social media and the social relationship has very close connection with the social capital. The necessity of social interactions for the construction of social capital argued by Jin Hyun (2014) and opined that, social capital studies have examined individual social relationships as well as how the use of mass media influences social trust and an individual’s relationships with others and society. While, Lin (1999) cited in Steinfield et al (2008) argued that extends this notion by emphasizing the importance of developing a social network, considering social capital to arise from “investments in social relations with expected returns” and suggests that the benefits arise from the greater “access to and use of resources embedded in social networks”.

The relations among the individuals in online community is also forming a strong bond in the society which creates different kind of capital rather than physical or human capital. Citing Bourdieu, Fuchs (2014, 114) mentioned that users employ social media because they strive for a certain degree to achieve what Bourdieu terms social capital (the accumulation of social relations), cultural capital (the accumulation of qualification, education, knowledge) and symbolic capital (the accumulation of reputation). On the other hand, Bourdieu (1986) mentioned that social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition –or in other words, to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

The relationship due to social interactions are affecting the development of social capital. Julien (2014) mentioned that the social interactions that occur maintain and reinforce social relationships and social standing through the exchange of social capital. Julien also mentioned that through online social interactions, individuals make expressions of social capital that specifically affect and extend their relationships. A new form of social capital arises in online interactions: *digital* social capital. Internet memes are one such expression of this new form of digital social capital.

### **3.6 Social media in Finland**

In Finland, Information technology and the participation is more than any other country. In the latest Global Information technology report 2015, Finland ranked 2nd in overall IT usage. The overall position of IT status of Finland is same last three year while the individual indicators changed in every year. The best side of the report is that Finland has the strong infrastructure for IT development. (WEF reports 2015, 156.)

Due to high penetration of information technology and new communication tools it is assumed that the user of ICT and social media has a big influence in the everyday life in Finland. There are different opinion about the use of IT and social media in Finland. In her article titled ‘Non users of ICT and social media-marginal voices’ Talsi (2014,75) argued that in a society where using information technology is a norm and the whole society is more or less mediated by information technologies, not using them is interpreted as abnormal activity. Which says clearly the rise of marginalization for not using the information technology and also social

media. Talsi (77) also argued that the non-use of social media can also exclude people from a social environment and social relationships.

Different study shows that service users are strongly engaged with social networks and different kind of social media. The state of social media in Finland (2013) quoting Statistics Finland mentioned that more than a half (exactly said 51 percent) of the 16 to 74-year-old Finns had been following at least some social network service in the past three months. The study shows that 61 percent of the same age group additionally uses a Smartphone. This constantly growing amount of people accessing internet through mobile and tablet devices is also changing the way how social media is used in our every-day lives. (The state of Social Media in Finland 2013). Recent observation shows that almost all the public service and also the private organizations have their social media channel to disseminate information. To stay connected and provide the information to the clients, prospective clients it's going actively. Social media not only found useful for the marketing purposes of the company or products. But it is now also same to getting close to the clients or service users.

In the global IT report 2015, the rate of individual usage of internet is also quite high among the listed countries. Finland is 7th among the top individual user's countries. The report (4) says that, ICTs act as a vector of social development and transformation by improving access to basic services, enhancing connectivity, and creating employment opportunities. In these ways ICTs affect how people live, communicate, interact, and engage among themselves and with their governments.

Dahlgren (2005) and Näh & Chung (2012) cited in Näsi (2015,111) argued that the newly emerging journalistic environment that we can all participate in enables news audiences to interact with both professional and amateur journalists. This adds new value to communication in the form of entertainment, peer support, expertise and social capital. When it comes about the strength and power of the readers and as a person, how anyone could influence the discussions in different level, by using the social media. When discussing about the photography Näsi (2015,122) mentioned this means that ordinary people not only have the opportunity to create, combine and send visual content to one another but can also deliver desired information online in a variety of social media forums. What is more, social media, personal websites and blogs offer a limitless audience as long as the marketing and the content is well planned and executed.

The essence of communication in our life is important in any means which Fuchs (2015, 242) says as an essential feature of human society. He argued that there can be no society without communication; human create and maintain social relationships by

communication and thereby continuously reproduce their social existence. Media, such as the internet, are a means of communication. They are tools that enable the production of communication and human sociality. Means of communication, like nature, education, love, care, knowledge, technology, affects, entertainment, language, transportation, housing, food, cities, cultural goods and traditions etc. In this context of tech friendly and well-structured information communication technology demands better use of those digital tools for the wellbeing of people. The citizen's wellbeing and the professional services of social work are also necessary to adopt those means of IT, social network and communication tools, which are a regular practice in business, marketing and other fields. But, in Finland, the opportunity of social work professionals are ignored here, in relation with the social media platforms.

Digital media and communication tools are also much more important to people's lives as the other mainstream media in Finland. Näsi (2015,111) argued that in Finland, engaging with readers and involving them in making the publication currently seems to have become at least equally important to publishing exclusively amateur news photographs. Established newspapers are interested in building a social bond with their readerships and direct the media time the readers consume towards the newspaper. Naturally the link between the printed paper and the online version is stronger than ever. As newspapers shift towards digital news services, the simultaneously crave a strong position in people's everyday lives.

Even the elderly people of Finland needs to be taken into account to formulate effective policy for information technology use and social media connectivity. As Nordlund et al (2014, 8) argued that the information technology could be introduced to the elderly through some entertaining or useful activity. People's interest could be sparked by different things: some would like to keep in touch with their grandchildren living on the other side of the globe, others visit their childhood landscapes using interactive maps, some scan old photos from their family albums for the future generations to see, etc.'

#### **4 Social Media connecting social work**

The identity we are making in the virtual world is portraying ourselves. According to Turkle (1996, 180), internet is a big place for creativity and experimentation. He argued that the internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life. In its virtual reality, we self-fashion and self-create. Those virtual interactions does not necessarily the person's actual opinion or position about real life. From the office to bedroom or wherever our destination is, we can't escape from the technology. It is quite crucial in our daily life. And at the same time as a social worker it demands more from us due to our responsibility and diversified area of work in the society. Technological applications are having big influence in our working life. It is also directing the individual, society and the social processes for more coordination and effective services.

The working area of the social workers is very wide. The development of technological tools could ensure the development of social work. As Heyes (2014) mentioned that every day we support thousands of isolated families in poverty and on the margins of society. We prevent violence in the home, enable people to parent safely while they manage drugs, alcohol misuse, mental and physical health difficulties and much more. On the other hand, Kairala (2014,22) describing the situation of social work in the technological context in Finland and argues that the technological applications are a tool that enables the work to be done more efficiently and economically but also makes possible the furthering of social work's inherent goals by technological means.

Social work issues and the role of social work professionals become more challenging when it comes to active participation in social media. As Hansén-Haug and Hyppänen (2014, 86) mentioned that It may be challenging to discuss social work in social media, especially when using your name. And, at the same time it is also the negative image of social work professional buildup in media. Because the situation is quite common in public sphere about the social workers. The impact and user experiences are the reasons for different point of view.

##### **4.1 Professional expertise**

In Finland, the technology centered lifestyle and the development of diverse new media tools, making life easier. In this context, professional social workers in Finland and their working experience with the use of social media is very important to study. As a country of high penetration of information technology and vast user of digital tools as well as social media among the population it has strong connection with the social works professionals. Nowadays

social workers are more used to with the use of social media for their education, research, connecting with the professionals, organizations.

Regarding the digital technology, Isotalo and Ringman (2012) cited in Kairala (2014, 66) argues that in Finland, the technologies involved in the actual implementation of social work client processes are few. A digital portfolio is a useful example of a tool developed for young people who are at risk of exclusion. The youth use the Internet-based programme independently, which enhances their understanding of their lives and resources and enables them to make plans for the future by using various tools. The programme also enables interaction with professionals and the user's own social network.

Even, the importance of the strong relationship of the social workers and the social media is getting more discussed by the social workers themselves. As Hansén-Haug and Hyppänen (2014, 88) pointed out that the social media is establishing itself, especially among younger people, as an important discussion forum. Social work professionals have not yet adapted it in a prominent way, and do not yet know how to use social media to produce and share information about social work. Social workers should acquire the appropriate technological skills and be familiar with the basics of information security.

The public image about the social workers in Finland and other countries are almost same. In every case, it is very frustrating. Hansén-Haug and Hyppänen (2014, 86) opined that in the public sphere and media, social work often receives a negative reputation. It requires professional courage to express opinions under your name. Social workers are doing so many great things with their professional responsibility. But why all these doesn't comes out to public. Lucie Heyes (2014) has some strong opinion about the circumstances and according to her, positive stories are more difficult to tell in social work than they might be in health and education. Our involvement carries a stigma and it's natural that people don't want it to be public knowledge. In social work we make judgments that we believe to be in children's best interests. Sometimes it doesn't feel like that to the child, and the family does not always agree. It may be a good outcome to place a child with foster careers where they then thrive, but for every child removed there will be parents who lost the care of their child. We have to respect these are not good news stories for everyone involved.

The changing nature of the society, people and the other factors are also affecting the relationship with the technological tools. According to the Pohjola (2014) the technology-mediated change occurring within social work is not neutral. It permanently alters the relations connected to ways of thinking, cultural practices and service functions. It is important to be sensitive, in multilayered ways, to cultural, historical, local, communal and professional values, knowledge and traditions. The processes of change are always sociocultural and contextual and



are interlaced with social, environment-bound, institutional and professional changes. All factors of change are bound to time, space and place. Whereas in the context of technology, it is typical to claim applications to be independent of these, it narrowly means institutional time and place. However, the time and space dimensions of everyday life also have a strong presence.

#### **4.2 Reaching clients**

Social workers are also strongly recommending themselves to engage with the social media to encounter the challenges of negative public image. As Novell (2013) argued that challenging these negative portrayals and presenting an honest picture of what we do is essential for restoring confidence in our profession. The media is central in shaping public perception and, subsequently, in shaping local and national policy. While it may not be possible for every social worker to represent their profession on prime-time television, it is possible for every social worker to have an online blog and a Twitter account.

When we are talking about the relationship between the social workers with the social media, we are, of course pointing the rights of the clients. And, again it is the most important thing to consider the ultimate well-being of the clients. As Pohjola (2014) opined that the question is how technology-mediated services can act as a generator and an empowering instrument regarding the future possibilities for people and communities. In this process the trust and togetherness is necessary among the social workers and the clients. In this regard, Pohjola (2014) mentioned that in this way, these services could support citizens' everyday lives by enhancing their security, trust, attachment, inclusion and sense of belonging.

Sharing, caring and getting different information and life events are widely touched by internet. More likely, it is social media where we are living in. People engaged there are acting in a common point of view and as a community. These issues correctly pointed out by the Australian Association of Social Workers in their Ethics and Practice Standards Guideline – Social Media, information and communication technology – Part 2: Social Networking August (2013). It mentioned that “First we lived on farms, then we lived in cities, and now we're going to live on the internet!” (‘The Social Network’, David Fincher, Columbia Pictures, 2010). And, here, the importance of internet in our life is now out of discussion. The new wave of discussion is, whether we can live our life without using the internet and social media as a professional social worker.

Lucie Heyes (2014) argues that we also need more varied and accurate representations of social work, positive storylines in the soaps with characters that are compassionate and capable. The profession needs to promote its success stories, but social workers are not forthcoming about sharing examples of good practice. Perhaps it's just modesty,

but I suspect it's because they don't want to draw attention to themselves, only to risk falling from a greater height if something on their next case goes wrong.

### **4.3 Responsible practice**

As the new communication tools are involving with the professional practice the challenges of ethics and risk management is also became a concern. As Reamer (2013,163) argues that the emerging forms of digital and electronic practice have unleashed a staggering array of ethical and risk management issues involving practitioner competence, client privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, conflicts of interest, boundaries and dual relationships, consultation and client referral, termination and interruption of services, documentation, and research evidence.

There are different opinions about the professional boundaries and privacy of social workers using social media. Strom Gottfried et al (2014, 60) argued that the online interactions with clients inherently carry a risk of boundary crossings and, ultimately, harmful violations. A social worker who, through twitter or Facebook, learns unnecessary details of a client's workplace or personal life may have difficulty keeping those details from impinging on helping relationships.

The use of social media and online platforms is as necessary as the ethical responsibility. As Hansén-Haug and Hyppänen (2014, 88) there are many more reasons why we social workers should use social media; we can all be more active on various social media sites. Social media can broaden our professional networks and help us to stay informed. That being said, it is important for social workers to be ethically responsible on the Internet. We social workers are all about social networks. We use theories to explain relationships and networks – we have to prove that we can use them successfully in social media.

According to the Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2009) cited in Halabuza (2014) the responsibility for establishing the tenor of professional relationships lies clearly with the social worker. It is important that social workers carefully consider the degree of self-disclosure in their postings on social media. In practice, when self-disclosure is used it must be based on the client's needs and his or her best interests. And in a similar voice Halabuza (2014) argues that it is important to promote safe internet behavior with clients, especially youth and children, including helping them develop exit strategies.

## **5 Reserach Process**

In this research the qualitative methods used for the methodological study which is the most relevant with the overall study. As Silverman (2010, 124) mentions that ‘there are no right or wrong methods, there are only methods that are appropriate to your topic and the model with which you are working.’ Semi- structured open ended questionnaire used for the interviews and content analysis is used for the data analysis.

The aim was set according to the two main research questions. One of which is to get to know the experiences/perceptions of Finnish social workers about using social media and their professional life regarding the new challenges of digital media and technological tools. The professional social workers qualification is defined by the Finnish ministry of social affairs and health in the ‘act on qualification requirements for social welfare professionals’ (2005). It has some changes regarding the qualification to become a professional social worker (Act on Social Welfare Professionals, 2015).

### **5.1 Purpose of the study**

Professional Social Workers in Finland and their working experience with the use of social media is very important to study. As a country of high penetration of information technology and vast user of digital tools as well as social media among the population it has strong connection with the social works professionals. Moreover, nowadays social workers are more used to with the use of social media for their education, research, connecting with the professionals, organizations.

The study, will help us to find out the social worker's view about using social media for better client services. The relationship of media and social work has many significance. As Payne (2005, 162) argued that the influences of social psychological approaches and its relations with social work. He pointed out that it emphasized in particular how relationships are formed and managed by people in situations, issues of identity related to matters such as stigma, group behavior on social and personal change. In this research, the relationship and its effects are taken into consideration. As the main purpose of the social workers is, to serve clients, and put clients on first in every phase of profession. The use of social media could help in a great way to enhance effective services for them. Moreover, in the context of new digital technological advancement, engagement with the social media will play important role for the development of social work profession.

The availability of the information during the debates about social work issues are also a big reason of public attitude to social work. Sometime it's the media or the social media space where people knows about the social workers. Payne (2005, 173) argues that if we are all shaped by cultural and community constructions, we can only achieve our own influence by being aware of how social structures and power construct our knowledge and therefore our world. In Foucault's analysis, our lives are shaped by normalizing truths produced by the exercise of power. They are normalizing because people with power have set these truths as conventional social expectations. Thus, these truths gain the respectability of objective reality, and we all join in policing them.

When it comes about power then social media definitely made a big difference in power relations in the society. Fuchs (2014,70) citing different definitions about power, argues that no matter which of these definitions one follows, it is clear that power has to do with the question of who can influence what society looks like and who controls the means that allow such influence.

The purpose is also to study to identify the challenges, opportunities of different social media tools as well as information technology to provide professional social work services. It is also significant to understand the global changes in digital communication technology, public-private services, social work professional's role in online.

## **5.2 Research Questions**

The research questions designed to know the opinion and experience of the social workers about the information technology and social media platforms. Here, in the study of social workers professional aspects, the role of service users have the same importance. In this regard Juhila 2003 cited in Payne (2005,165) mentioned that in a social work relationship, it appears that there are only two roles available, social worker or client, and that these are asymmetrical in power. That is, the participants have different kinds of power over different aspects of the relationship. In this way, the questions have the view of two interrelated sides and their relationships.

1. How social workers are connected with the digital tools and social media?
2. How information technology and social media influences your work as a professional social worker?
3. What is the role of social workers to ensure better client service by using social media?

The first question gives the scope to know how the social worker's view IT and professional life. Social workers personal as well as professional relation with the media reflects in their answer in general. Likewise, the understanding of media concepts also reflected in their opinion. The second questions gives us the outlook of social workers from the practical point of view and it describes the challenges social workers are facing in workplace. The last question mostly deals from the service user's perspective. How social media could be used in practice for the benefit of the client's emphasized here.

The most important part is that the professional expertise and new media platforms together can bring diverse change in the whole service improvement in social work service. In this way, the beneficiaries are of course, the clients. Though there are 'positive' and 'negative' consequences of new media tools like every other things. But this question leads to a clear space where social media tells the opportunity for both parties.

### **5.3 Data Collection**

The data collection was planned to include two way inputs for the research. The main emphasis was given to the professional social workers who have a university master's and/or higher degree in social work and at the same time working as a social worker in Finland. The data collection took place in two different stage. One of them was the face to face interviews of the professional social workers working in public/private organization. The second option was to collect data by online questionnaire from the same individuals. Moreover, i have decided to include students perspective though the study designed mainly about the professional social workers perspective. Due to the frequent use of internet and social media among young students of social work and considering the young social workers social media behavior, student graduates were also interviewed, where all of them responded online questionnaire. Two students who were in their final stage to become a social worker during the data collection period, who have answered the online questionnaire.

The face to face interview and online questionnaire both have the same type of questions with same order. English language was the medium of all the interviews and data collection. Four professional social workers face to face interview and the others responded through the online questionnaire. One respondent have answered the online questionnaire as well as participated in the face to face interview. Among the interviewees, some of the participants were quite young in their age, who started their career few years ago. Though, the actual age of the interviewees not specified as there was no option in the questionnaire and not

emphasized. In the process of purposeful sampling, the social workers chosen according to the professional identity, language knowledge and availability. Snowball sampling also used to find respondents. Silverman (2010, 141) argued that purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are studying and choose our sample case carefully on this basis.'

For the recording of the interviews smart phone recording apps used as well as taken notes in the diary. All the face to face interviews transcribed as it is in paper format. Online questionnaires answers and the transcribed interviews analyzed later. The online questionnaire shared in different social media platform like Facebook groups of social workers, Twitter page of social work organization and in others as well as personal twitter page. The question also shared through the professional social workers union in Finland's Facebook and twitter page. The open online question was intended to the Finnish professional social workers only. However, the duration of data collection was from August 2014 to March 2015, where, all the online interviews received by December 2014.

In the process, most of the respondent were from the municipalities of northern Finland. All the face to face interviews held in the northern Finland. Others places answers came through the online questionnaire. Which includes, central Finland and some of the respondents (two) were living in abroad (outside Finland) during interview period. Among the ten respondents two are male and the rest of the eight are female participants. In the interview, the questions were not asked in the same mood or manner. Often the interaction continued with the pace of discussion and in relation with the subject to another one, more like spontaneous way. So that there is no disruption of thoughts. Moreover, before interviewing face to face, we had small talks as well as small discussion before, about the topic. In case of online questionnaire, it is replaced by the questionnaire and the introduction as well as the email forwarding texts. Which in both way, helped the respondents to feel more relaxed before participating interview process.

To find the answer, I have put the online questionnaire in some online discussion group in Facebook, where the Finnish social workers are the members. Simultaneously, the online questionnaire was also posted in my Twitter profile to get attention. I have used hashtags of socialmedia, socialwork, sosiaalityö, sosiaalityöntekijä and posted in social network sites. I have also used social work, social worker, Finland these specific words and posted in the Finnish social workers union, social work blogs and their social media channels.

## 5.4 Challenges and limitations

In the beginning of the research, i have discussed the issue of respondent's language. The issue of doing research in Finland, is also related with the medium of the study, the language of the research field. In most cases, it is hard to manage English speaking respondents. Then again, the quality of the language, the level of English knowledge is another concern for this study. Here my idea was how to get the thoughts with a detail view. It's because, the respondents might have difficulties in expressing their emotions, deep thoughts. In some way, the texts like online questionnaire or short questions answer might be helpful for those.

When i have decided to do my master's thesis in English, or actually it should be in English because of the study instruction of the comparative social work program. It's even possible to think doing in Finnish language. Here, the question was, the response from the professional social workers. It was, definitely a tough task to find the appropriate respondents who speak better English (at least can be interviewed). So, it was a center part of the research design that, the respondents need to be good in English. The social workers who speak English, given preference here. The online questionnaire helped to get some distant respondents answer. But the language knowledge, here also worked in a sense that, the respondents answers was quite short for many questions.

Moreover, time factor and changing aspect of information technology and continuous updates were an important issue. As the social media and related studies and applications are changing so fast and the new concepts are developing day by day. In this context, it's was a challenging task to integrate those in the overall structure of the research. As Voshel and Wesala (2015, 75) argued that we can expect there will always be new challenges as technologies evolve and as we begin to integrate the new capacities into our practice.

In practice, the changing nature of social media and the new contexts developing everyday was a big challenge for the overall research. This started from the very beginning when the research started. The interviews and analysis took a bit longer time. New and latest social media trends and its use also influenced the study. Every time I was writing, then the first thing was to look for more recent resources and practical examples. I was worried every time because, for me it seems very much necessary to integrate the analysis and reflections of the research with the latest resources. I have tried my best to do it. I believe, the validity question for this research is well maintained and addressed.

## 5.5 Data analysis

The analysis started with identifying the main points of social media and the relation with the social workers practical experience. The interviews categorized and marked with different labels for easy understanding and explanation. The comparative approach is given special attention while analyzing the data. The relations of social workers with the information technology in general, the social media, professional practice as well as the gender and other issues. The interviews are categorized in different label. I started to use the label of social media, network, online, digital, social worker, interaction, relationship and the client service. Among those labels the users experiences are presented in a diverse way and most of the experiences of those social workers reflected in their voice. Finnish social workers.

The social workers privacy was a big concern while collecting data and interview session. To protect the privacy of the respondents, anonymity maintained through making different fictional name. At the same time, the exact locations of the respondents working place avoided consciously. Transcriptions of the interviews done by myself.

Content analysis is used for the analysis. All the data categorized according to differ theme. Thematic categories derived from the data and related with the questions of the research. There are some sub categories. The analysis continued following the initial coding of data. In this analysis, the categories are reflected by the data and also the research questions. The conventional content analysis approach or inductive category development.

About the categories and coding Hsieh, Shannon (2005, 1279) argued that as this process continues, labels for codes emerge that are reflective of more than one key thought. These often come directly from the text and are then become the initial coding scheme. Codes then are sorted into categories based on how different codes are related and linked. In this study, the research questions are developed also as the categories of the analysis. The sub categories are based on coding and influenced by the research questions and the titles, subtitles of the questionnaire. The respondent's names according to the analysis are as follows, Social Worker1, Female student, Male student, Social Worker3, Social worker4, Social worker5, Social worker6, Social worker7, Social worker8, Social worker9 and Social worker10.



## 6 How social workers are connected with the digital tools and social media?

### 6.1 Individual understanding about social media

As the media is closely related with our everyday lives that its significance in the society is enormous nowadays. Social media and new technological tools are bringing people in a place where the sharing of information, connectivity, shared values, thoughts, knowledge's and so many other things bringing positive changes in the society. The advantages of new communication tools can dramatically change the use of resources in a effective way. It is also possible to use the social media tools and new communication technologies could lead social wellbeing of people.

The use of internet and social media in general is not same for all the social workers. Even its 2015, there are some social workers who doesn't believe or don't have ideas about the diverse role of internet and social media. Some social workers don't recognize the recent developments of social media concerning the power and rights of people. Here we are going to look through the experiences, opinions and the thoughts of social workers and explain those issues.

The understanding of the individual social workers about the information technology is not same. Technology and the information have different meaning in their personal as well as in the professional life. The changes of the technological tools and the implications of new digital society made the everyday life more diverse due to its increasing use. According to Castells (2004, 42) the notion of the information or knowledge society is simply a technological extrapolation of the industrial society, usually assimilated to the western culture of modernization. In our daily life it's creating new relations and meaning of different actions in the communication technology. The users of the digital media tools and internet communication have influenced the life of social workers in too, which is also very usual in the present modern society. Here, we will try to look on the individual's experience and thoughts about the use of technology in their everyday life.

Social workers finds that the social media is necessary for them and also for the profession. It is clear that they can't deny its importance in every aspect. When the question asked how much it's important to use IT in everyday life, social workers have very common voice echoed about the necessity of IT in their life. Social worker<sup>5</sup> says that. *'In information society IT is an integral part of everyday life, it connects people and issues, it has possibilities to create new kind of networks and communication manners. It is the fact in the current society and it's essential for social work to follow that.'* It's very true that now our internet is shaping

the society in many ways, where it's now quite impossible to ignore the information technology.

About the network society, Castells (2014) argues that because people are increasingly at ease in the multi-textuality and multidimensionality of the web, marketers, work organizations, service agencies, government, and civil society are migrating massively to the Internet, less and less setting up alternative sites, more and more being present in the networks that people construct by themselves and for themselves, with the help of Internet social networking entrepreneurs, some of whom become billionaires in the process, actually selling freedom and the possibility of the autonomous construction of lives. From this, the increasing nature of virtual reality is reflecting more clearly that how it's integrating with our society. The necessity of network and connectivity is the main aspect here in this development. In this regard, Van Dijk cited in Fuchs (2014, 36) mentioned that as a result of the interconnection of platforms, a new infrastructure emerged: an ecosystem of connective media with a few large and many small players.

But as a professional and due to different nature of work it might happen that the individuals are not thinking in the same way. For some professionals, they are not so much active and strongly connected to Information communication technology. Social Worker<sup>9</sup> have same kind of opinion where he says that *'It's quite important for me but not anymore. Of course, I am using internet, reading newspapers and everything like that. I visit there once per day or several days. Not so regular. Though I have it in my cell phone. The thing is that I am not so hooked for internet or social media. Earlier, it was a bit important but not anymore. Earlier, I used quite a lot Facebook. Chat with friends. I have friends in USA, Canada. Now I have my hobbies and so on. Those are my important things.* The dependency and accuracy of information is also becoming more important in this case. In this way, limited usage of network and communication tools also contributing in the connectivity. In the form of sharing information and communication it influences the socialized communication which Castells (2014) mentioned as the process of socialized communication.

## **6.2 Are you dependent on social media?**

It's true that the interactive nature of communication in the online platforms brings the network more closely. As Van Dijk (2006,39) pointed out that in the network society, social relations become increasingly interactive by the combination of social and media networks with multilateral communication. But, the social workers, in general are not very active in

terms of usage of information technology and digital tools use in everyday life. There are huge differences about the importance of IT and digital tools, social media platforms among the social workers. Social Worker<sup>7</sup> have very reserved viewpoint of using social media as she opined that *'I am quite careful everything i share. I don't share a lot my personal information, sometimes a little.'*

As we have seen the less interests of Social Worker<sup>9</sup> about the information technology here he also mentioned that sharing information in social media is very rare. He says that *'Last time what I was sharing, it was in New Year's Eve, and we were visiting Alps. We were skiing there. I share one or two pictures when we were skiing. Most of my hobbies. I share those kind of things. In the summer time I may be shared some pictures of fishing. Those are the things I share, almost those. Because I want to give work, me and my personal life separated. Maybe it will be so different, if share everything about every side of my life. if I would share now like I am work, now I am at meeting, at park, it's not. I think it's not good thing.'* It gives us the message that the social workers are not really a big user group of social media and digital communication tools. The access of information technology here is not the question, the main point could be the use and apply the digital tools during the working life, especially when the job is a social worker.

In this information society where the digital tools are playing vital role in our life and the power of new technologies are affecting the role of professionals working life too. Social work profession is also changing in a great way due to the impact of information and communication technology and changes of society. For this reason, the user experience of social media varies among the professionals. About the dependency in social media Social Worker<sup>8</sup> opined that *'I don't think that I am dependent on it. Like I have to be there. But I think it's a good tool. Tool to use in everyday life. 'While some other have quite a different view.'*

At present, we are continuously interacting with each other in the society to be 'connected' in different situations of our lives. It is inevitably important for our existence. The relations and connectedness has common goals and interests as well. As Chayko (2002, 19) perfectly mentioned that we all are 'social connections' and the 'social connectedness lies in the mind'. The diverse way of our activities makes us to be connected in the society and there is a great feeling of being close to others, bond and community feeling helps to maintain the relationships. Social interactions takes place in the society face to face relations or in the distant relationships where technology plays vital role. In the modern world, the technological tools made this connectedness far way smoother and easier than before. New media tools like

social media, indeed a major part of modern life. Social relationships and everyday engagement is also becoming more dependent on the social media tools.

Social Worker1 says that *'I do feel that I am dependent on IT and social media. Sometimes even too much. I wouldn't understand the concept and mechanism of social media if I am not there. And understanding mechanisms, how it works. And what kind of topics are people sharing and commenting and what kind of information is good to share. So, that's what I learn by doing and being there in social media.'*

Despite the different views about the use and frequency of using social media, the importance and effective feature of network society is vital for the social workers. Social Worker5 opined that *'for me, it is quite necessary, even though the main sources of information for my research is through the other channels than social media.'* In this context, Perron et al (2010,69) mentioned that to effectively use social networks, whether for obtaining employment, securing resources, or obtaining information, social workers need to understand the capabilities of these networks, and how they can be effectively understood, managed, and utilized within a digital environment. In this context of changing nature of society and issues, it's definitely effective to engage with the new media tools.

### **6.3 Social media use as a social worker**

It is expected that, in the current scenario of technology and information society, social media experience as a social worker will be more visible. So, this is really like this or not? Here, in this phase, the answer of this question will come with so a complex overview. Because as the social media and its impact is increasing day by day, the social worker's role is becoming more challenging. The use of social media in practical life is a big 'to do' list for the professionals social workers. We will see this from the respondent's opinion, what they actually think and how to manage the working life and use the social media.

Social worker9 mentioned that *'At the moment, social work and social media are so separated. I think the only way to get nearer to each other is important to integrate. Because it cannot be so separate nowadays. So, there huge need for that.'* Sapey (1997, 810) mentioned that what is equally important is for social workers to use their knowledge of communication to analyze the choices they will make in the use of technology. A core skill of social work is decision making in complex non-rational circumstances. Social workers need to make decisions, not only about the action they might take in certain complex cases, but, as professionals engaged in communication with others, about the style and nature of that

interaction. In effect, they continuously choose the most appropriate and effective communication media given the nature of the messages they need to convey.

When it comes the profession, then social workers feels image crisis. They just think that their duty is to serve clients first. So, to use social media and enhancing the professional goals comes to the next stage and practically this part also ignored in a large scale. Social workers find it as a hobby, not using as a part of work. Social Worker1 in this point says that *‘I have been doing it mainly on free time. it’s my hobby and..but I do sometimes. Write about it during the work time. So I don’t see it a... Where is the line between my work and hobby?’* Where Social Worker8 says *‘not at all’* as she doesn’t uses any social media during work.

#### **6.4 Lack of professional Knowledge**

Social workers have to deal with so many cases every day and in every case, it's a busy work. Nowadays, the number of workers are not enough and social workers in the most places facing load of work all the time. The need for understanding and creating new space to speak about social work profession definitely need time.

Perron et al (2010,69) mentioned that to effectively use social networks, whether for obtaining employment, securing resources, or obtaining information, social workers need to understand the capabilities of these networks, and how they can be effectively understood, managed, and utilized within a digital environment.

Social Worker7 opines that *‘I think it’s really important to use different kind of media. I’ll try to learn to use it more.’* It says, the professionals are not really known too much about the potential use of social media. The new knowledge and understanding of course, will make the professional quality and image stronger. When as a social worker i also feel to share a just quick message via Twitter even. It's so fast and quickly connecting with other people all the time. Social Worker4 has the same kind of opinion. About the new media necessity and knowledge, she says that *‘very necessary, since Twitter is the place where you get the information right away and fresh.’*

In reality, the social worker's knowledge, experience and quality is not same for everyone. The service depends on the person's ability and his/her experience and depth of knowledge. So, in this situation, we cannot expect best service in everywhere. The quality of the services can be ensured by more qualified social workers only. The criticisms, bad news and negative image of social workers in social media could easily happen for this reason. Social workers need to participate in the production and provide their opinions in social media.

Though some time lack knowledge about social media, blog posts, share and other technical issues creates obstacles to be involved in online platforms.

When it comes about the production of contents in the social media platforms, the user generated contents reflects the users own thoughts and their self-expression. In this point, Shao (2008) argued that people begin their relationship with user generated media (UGM) as consumer or lurkers. In order to seek information and entertainment, people visit user-generated sites to consume the content there, but they do not participate or contribute. After breaking through some barriers, individuals participate through interacting with the content and other users. Such interaction can help them build and maintain social connection as well as virtual communities. Finally, people come to produce the content on UGM. Producing is primarily an act of self-expression and self-actualization, both of which are aimed at constructing personal identity.

Though the truth is that the social workers are like others and nothing is perfect always. Social Worker9 says that *the knowledge about the social media is important. The problem is the problem is that the social work haven't found that ways how to use those tools. In Finnish it could be 'Sosiaalityö ei ole vielä löytänyt mitä kenkiä sosiaali media pitäisi hyödyntä'. There would be bigger need. If the social work need to be more läpinäkyvä or transparent. It could be better, if there could be some kind of blog. What people can follow up and get informed.*

It's true that the quality of social work varies by person to person. The level of qualification, experience and the ability to do the work is always fluctuates among the individuals. Because social workers are also like others and part of the society. When some clients got a bitter experience or victim of 'bad' social work, then it goes so viral in the media and digital communication platforms.

## 6.5 Not a healthy way

Social workers have a opinion that to be in the social media as a professional social workers is not a good thought to continue. It has so many risks and not a 'healthy place' to be as a professional. The reasons includes, stereotypes discussion blaming social work all the time, not included in working time, big privacy concern, harmful for the job and so on. They think that it is useful and have positive impact on social work and would be more useful.

Meyrowitz (1985) cited in Van Dijk (2006, 39) argues that the use of media to inform and to communicate in society and to realize social relationships is not without risk.

Every medium has its own weight and properties such as communication capacities. The combination of social and media networks causes the media to become social environments themselves.

Social Worker<sup>4</sup> thinks that *'it is good thing when you know the rules and use it in a healthy way. Of course it is also a place where much harm can be done.'* The necessity of social media use by the social workers is also mentioned by others. As Social Worker<sup>5</sup> opined that *'Social media makes it faster and easier to get access into the latest information, for instance on political debates, or issues on social work discussed in 'traditional media'. Using social media as a social worker gives a face to the profession, which can be really positive.* In this way the image of social work professionals in the media, nowadays in social media platforms is very much one sided and stereotyped with lots of negative aspects. Social Worker<sup>6</sup> think that *'social workers don't have a good reputation. In the internet we are seen as incompetent and sometimes even evil.'*

Though the need and importance of social media in the professional and personal life as well. There are so many factors like the knowledge of IT, social media, and ability to produce content, fear of getting focused in public, losing the job, employer's restrictions barring them to use it in personal and professional life. Social workers expressed worries all the time about the one sided reports in the media about social work. It is necessary that the participation in the debate and influencing the opinions could lessen the gaps of misunderstanding and misleading information in the media. It is correctly pointed out by Niven (2014) and he argues that no-one is saying that there shouldn't be rigorous scrutiny of people work, or even disciplinary processes where staff are not up to the task – but there has to be balance. For that to be truly achieved we need far more opportunities to showcase good practice. In short, social workers answers whether it risky to be in social media as a professional. Social Worker<sup>7</sup> thinks that *'not so special risks, naturally to lose your privacy. It's quite important issue'* and Male student mentioned that *'It's always risky to be in social media.'*

## **6.6 What image you see in social media**

Media itself has variety of roles rather than providing information. The picture of certain issues or profession in media is also a big cause to consider it what its role could be. As the media is always portraying the negative image and the accidents cases happens in relation with the social work or the social worker, it's demotivating the social workers to get interested on it. And, the other factor is, mainstream as well as social media is just criticizing the social workers role. In social media its worse in a sense that there anybody just writing 'whatever' they can.

But social workers following the rules, laws and regulations and clients right first. Those facts doesn't comes out in the social media criticism.

Social workers see 'colored', 'stereotypical image', 'scandals' 'a place to get harmed', 'losing privacy', 'misleading' adjectives when it comes their own picture in social media. It is quite fading the professional identity. In real, what they think is quite frustrating. As below are the opinion about the media image of social work, which tells us more about it. Social worker5 says that *'stereotypical image similar as in 'traditional' media: social workers who take your child for instance. But at the same time, social media has made it easier for social workers as well to provide more information on their work, and nowadays I see much of a positive image as well. It's mostly when social workers themselves stand up and talk about the issues to promote the image of the profession or support social justice etc.'*

Most of the cases, where social work is criticized, related to the children issues. The negative reports about the child abuse cases influences the social workers in many ways. As Franklin and Parton (1991,32) argued that social workers themselves read, view and listen to media along with other members of the general public and are not immune to the effects of their messages. Persistently negative appraisals of social work means morale within the profession suffers to the extent where some authorities are now facing critical difficulties in recruiting social work stuff.

The fear of getting labelled with negative reaction is also a reason. As Social worker1 says, *'I do feel that sometimes social workers are ashamed of their own profession. They are not telling it on social media or anywhere publicly that they are social workers. They are afraid that they are going to be labelled as something negative. And, I've heard stories when social works...For example, in a party and people are telling what they are doing as a job. When they say they are social workers, there is totally silence. Straight afterwards, everyone are like silence. They don't know how to react when you tell that you are a social worker.'*

The credibility of articles, posts, news reports is a big reason to stay away from the media reports and social media. As we see Social Worker9 says that *'If I am reading Iltalehti or Iltasanmoat (both are locally published evening newspaper) what social worker done or not, if I am reading that news then , its sure that 8 among 10 news is negative, negative side that why social works haven't done this or that. Because I know that things are not never so.. One sided. Social workers cannot tell to the journalist that it's not like that. She or he have this only one side of that story. Earlier Couple of years ago, I was, like, why the hell they are writing such kind of rubbish or something. Now not.'*



## 6.7 What to share and why?

Sharing information and using media has a lot to do for the social workers. Social workers experience says that it need to be done very carefully. As Social Worker8 says that *'None, not even my profile picture. I think name is enough, or that can also be too much. I have thought about changing my name shorter of not use my last name at all in social media.'* But it's not what others think. Social Worker 5 mentioned that *'Information on the issues that relate with social work as a profession but also with the clients, to support social justice, wellbeing and correct some stereotypes.'*

Social worker1 has a more concrete view about what should be shared in social media by the social workers. Social Worker1 opined that *'we always should share the information about services and not to keep it in hidden. And there is no risk for you as a social worker, when you sharing information in public services and about the work you do. I don't see any risk there. Here, people are afraid. If they share in public about services it's gonna increase the numbers of clients and the amount of money used for the services. And also employees don't want the workers to share a lot about the services. Because it costs money.'*

Social work profession is also changed in a great way due to the impact of information and communication technology and changes in the society. Perron et al (2010,71) mentioned that the field of social work needs to understand how these changes are influencing and will continue to influence all aspects of social work.

Social Worker5 thinks that the social workers should be involved actively in social media and it will influence the overall standard of the profession. It will also help to reduce the misunderstandings, improve services. As she mentioned that *'social media is kind of a mirror of the current society. So what's happening in the real life, is reflected on social media. Social media might have an output on some social issues, to make a change.'*

Because the online community is the place where the society itself belongs as more and more users are actively participating in that virtual communication. Castells (2014) mentioned that people do not live a virtual reality, indeed it is a real virtuality, since social practices, sharing, mixing, and living in society is facilitated in the virtuality, in what I called time ago the "space of flows".

Social worker9 thinks, *'social workers can tell people what is the other side of the story. That way people might understand. Because if you haven't been in contact with something then you can't just talk from your limited knowledge and without knowing the whole*

*things and surroundings.*’ As we see the active users are also the client of social workers. So it could also help the social workers to reach to clients. As Social Worker6 said that *‘we have to be where our clients are’*. Social worker4 has the similar view and mentioned that *‘you know how the social media works...helps the work with teenagers/children. You can bring social work issues in the table/discussion and maybe affect the image of social work/workers.’*

## **6.8 Finnish social workers in media- what public think?**

In Finland not many social workers are active user of social media and information technologies. In recent days several blogs and social media channels are contributing in the whole discussion. Where some of them have got good attention from the professionals and policy makers. But what is actually happening. Do people see it as influential and nice professional and people say about the social workers and write in social media. While explaining the ‘bad press’ and the journalists complex role in reporting social work,

Social workers feel that they become easy target of ‘negative’ by the media if anything happens concerning social work. As nowadays refugees and asylum seekers are coming in Finland, like other European countries, it also became a ‘stereotypical’ image of media to find connections and ‘blame’ them for certain situations. In the social media it goes too viral as people just heard something and from the previous ‘mindset’ it describes the situation. Social worker10 mentioned that *‘I think the last couple of years social work discussion has been concentrating on child protection issue and there has been this couple in Oulu (murder case involved a foreigner). Not so good cases what was happening and they got national level so big news that many people knows about those cases.’*

Social work framed in those cases, where how things went and who was responsible in those cases and so on.’ The social workers role in the discussions could become significant influence the understanding of the people engaged in social media and in the online discussions. Social worker4 thinks that *‘It is not good. Social workers don't bring their ideas and information enough in the public discussions. We should be prouder of our job, but I think that since social workers often stay quiet because there are issues that we cannot talk, the image is built mostly by the "angry clients". We should talk more about phenomenon's, and about what it really is what we do.’*

Why the situation of Finnish social workers is bad in the press, newspaper and social media platforms- explained by Male student. He says, ‘several reasons for that. *‘First, in our tasks we are committed to full and unconditional customer confidentiality. What*

*customers/media talks in public is not always the whole truth. Secondly, social work is still connected to old working methods, such as restrictions and public norms. On the other hand social work is blamed for being too "soft" and generous with those not participating in working life.'*

The public image about the social workers in Finland and other countries are almost same. In every case, it is very frustrating. According to HIRVELÄ (2013,English summary) 'Media Image of a Social Worker – Discourse Analysis from the Helsingin Sanomat from the Year 2010 Articles' the interpretations of social workers are that they are not doing anything and they use authority on their clients. A social worker is also burdened with work and responsible at it. Then there is the interpretation that the social worker does too much and interferes. There are co-operative interpretative repertoires and the interpretation of the influence gender might have on the social worker's decision making. There is also the silent social workers interpretative repertoire and in the last and certainly the least there is the interpretation of the social worker's help being beneficial.

Social Worker1 says that *the image of social work. And the image is blurry, it's grey, it something that people don't know what it is and there is one research in University of Jyväskylä and it said that..She interviewed journalists about social work. Even, journalists had really difficult time to understand social work. What they do exactly. It maybe also because, Social work is so broad. It's so different in different places.*

## **7 How Information technology and social media influences your work**

### **7.1 Practical social work connecting with social media**

Impact of social media is vast in our everyday life. It's very true in social life, personal and in professional life. The importance and necessities are acknowledged from every part. At the same time, the use and its influence to change the scenario is also focused in the answers.

The social workers in Finland have different opinions regarding the use of social media. Most of the social workers are not using the social media for the professional purpose. Very few numbers of social workers are using it during their working time. It's only because the work directly related with the client service provided by social media channels. The other are not using the social media actively during their working time. The social workers are not allowed to use the social media during their working time. It's not recommended and moreover, there is no guideline for the use of social media in working places. There are strong opinions about the privacy and fear about the media.

In the practical working life, social workers are facing a great challenge. *'Because it's becoming more and more important for the social workers to get connected with the social media trend. Female student says that 'because so many people's social lives starts and ends in social media. So that is the only avenue to use in reaching them.'*

While we are talking about the effects of negative image and all other things, the relationship with social media is also bigger concern for the professional social work. Perron et al (2010, 71) mentioned that the social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships. ICTs play a major role in human relationships, which has implications for social work practice. More specifically, increasing numbers of people are engaged in relationships that are mediated by some form of ICT, including electronic messages (email), SMS text message, social networking (e.g., Facebook), instant messaging service, or video chat (e.g., Skype). Social workers need to have an understanding of the roles that such ICTs may play in the lives of their clients. This may involve understanding how communication processes are different compared to face-to-face interactions; such as the use of emoticons – that is, characters and symbols use to express non-verbals.

The relation between the social media and social is found very unfortunate. Social workers are calling 'yellow media' and 'negative', 'one sided' report to those criticisms about social workers. It's all says the very opposite direction of the two sides. It's very common experience with everyone about the negative image of social workers in the social media as well as in the mass media.

Social Worker9 mentioned that, *'Of course you can learn different things about social work and other things from discussions. But in my opinion, in those groups. Where they are having discussions, information are not valid. That's why I don't read them at all. You don't get proper information, it's one sided, part of information. Something writing there, for example child protection is rubbish and something like that. So. I think there is no point to reading those because most of the time, the picture you can get from there is sooo one side. If i start writing there, hey man, it's not like that. Then it's going to be endless story. So, there is no point of doing it at all.'*

## **7.2 Negative feedback affecting the work of professionals**

The negative publicity in the social media channels as well as in the newspaper, TV creates uncomfortable situation for the social workers. It becomes a big reason for demotivation thought practically it cannot be like that. Social Worker4 says this kind of negative and one sided publicity with partial information have two results. About the effect she says, *'yes it does affects, and I think it is a good thing. It is always good thing to be critical towards you job and change it if you see that there is a place for the change'*

When a social workers gets that much negative attention due to 'stereotyped' negative publicity in social media and other media channels, no one gets interest to use it. The most reason is, it says what it's about to say, not the social workers of course.

Social Worker1 thinks that *'It brings you very negative atmosphere. If you read those writings about your work and it's really negative what you find from there. If you find that so. I think, they get disappointed and frustrated for reading that. They get a lot of negative feedback from their clients during the work time. And, if they go to social media and they find those places where people share negative ideas and experiences of social work. If you, if you (hhahh) read those the free time, it's really too heavy. '*

While in another argument about the social workers feeling 'negative' about the media, Niven (2014) also mentioned that the social work staff feel the representation of their profession is unduly negative as "the media never acknowledges the good work and outcomes achieved" because "the positives in social work are never reported". So the great influences of power and the media could be reinvented by being the part of the producer, consumer at the same time. Because the image of social work and the social workers in the media and among the public is 'misleading'. Aldridge (1994) and Franklin & Patron (2001) cited in Hall et al

(2006, 146) mentioned that press coverage is depicted as ‘vilification’, ‘far from neutral and balanced’, ‘damaging’ and ‘misinterpreting social work’.

### 7.3 Personal life is under attack?

Social workers are like the other people in the society. The profession is like the other professions. But there are some differences we see in our society. In Finland, probably the situation is quite different. The emphasis on social welfare and the crucial role of social work professionals in this processes is very crucial. Due to this social workers play a vital role taking different decisions concerning the welfare, wellbeing of the clients or citizens.

To keep the clients rights confidential and due to follow by the rules and regulations, privacy is a big concern for the social workers. It’s also seen as a barrier to use or to write about the profession in social media channels. Unfortunately, it has so many bitter experiences. When we are talking about the necessity of the social media and digital communication tools for better professional service, then some situations creates frustrating, demotivating status, when personally it is becoming harmful. As a person to be a social worker seems to be uncomfortable, disturbing and disgrace in some cases. So, is it a ‘shame profession.’? Social workers think that to be recognized as a social worker among friends and neighborhood is not a ‘good’ situation. In this case, it’s not the negative image and the rumors about the social work.

Social Worker1 mentioned that social workers are afraid and feel ashamed to tell others and introduce as a social worker. She says that *‘I’ve heard stories when social works...For example, in a party and people are telling what they are doing as a job. When they say they are social workers, then there situation turns in totally silence. Straight afterwards, everyone are like silence. They (social workers) don’t know how to react when you tell that you are a social worker.’* It’s quite common in child protection and related cases, where social workers are labelled as unqualified, responsible for any kind of problems about eh clients.

But here, in this context of recognizing oneself as a social worker is threatened by the society. It tells more how the society is thinking what is social work and what they actually do! It could also tell us why the social workers are seen as a different person than the others and whether the professional social workers are doing wrong. I can see here, the misunderstanding and the gap of communication. The interaction of social workers with the clients and other people is not spontaneous enough and lacks of information about the

professionals. The gap of information and communication could be managed only by letting people know what the social workers actually do and taking part in the discussion where those are taking place. If it's in the newspaper, social media platforms, then it's necessary to be there to tell the views of social workers.

Social workers in Finland are afraid of being get targeted. In some cases it's very frustrating and disturbing as well. Social Worker1 in this context says that *'I think social workers do get some positive attention than negative attention in media. Especially in newspaper media and TV media. And in social media, there is a lot of hate groups against social workers. Anti-social work groups. Who share a lot of crap of social work? So, social workers are not always so quality social work. It's somewhere, sometimes, some places, really bad. And, social workers are not perfect. We are humans. Yeah. And social worker is not always good and their client. Kind of victims of the bad social work. Bad social work sharing their experience. But sometimes, they go too far to the personal level. They are blaming social workers and they are sharing their addresses and names and like calling them with bad names; all that stuffs.'*

According to the social workers, in the different groups in social media channels, social work professionals are targeted for just playing blame game. Social Worker8 says that *'I think it is important to know what kind of social problems are in social media, such as bullying etc.'* But some social workers are not giving any kind of attention to those discussions in the social media. As Social Worker8 mentioned that *'No, Not at all. I don't care about discussions in social media.'*

#### **7.4 What happens, if you are a child protection social worker?**

Probably, the most discussed and blamed part of social workers in Finland is the role of social work professionals. I have seen so many articles in newspaper, posts, and videos in social media channels where the child protection related problems, accidents and any kind of information all the time criticizing the role of the social workers. Hall et al (2006,145) argued that although social workers work in a wide range of settings, a disproportionately large number of news reports concern social work with children. He mentioned the example of Franklin (2001) and argued that a study of almost 2,000 newspaper reports on social work in 1997 and 1998 found that nearly three quarters concerned social work with children.

Well, it's good to have the criticism, but the in reality it's more like 'hate game' which is only blaming the social workers and of course those have lots of emotional aspects

of those who are posting it. In those criticisms, the presentation, inappropriate information, lack of knowledge about the legal and other processes are the main things. It just full of irrelevant assumptions and at the end to blame the social worker's responsibility. Some recent child abuse and child related issues were quite heated up in the discussion tables.

Social Worker9 in this context explained that *'yeah, well, its true. Child protection is not soo...well I think its image is rubbish. I social media child protection social worker, there are. If you read from the chat rooms what child protection social workers done, its almost 9 out 10 have big criticism about social worker. What you have done or not. it have been that kind, for long long time. its true that..its very very bad reputation there. I have seen it also that there is huge criticisms going on in newspaper, TV and other places.'*

Child abuse and child related reporting in the press is always in priority of the coverage. But this is not the only thing. Society treating the child protection workers in a different way, which could be characterized 'third eye'. I see it is just putting the person and his/her family in another field and starting to judge them from that perspective. Here, the existence on that person in the community is considered as 'outsider' as others are looking what they do and their children does. It is true, in child protection services, the clients are not happy always or most of the time they got angry but sometime it goes too far.

Social Worker1 explaining some cases from the experience and she pointed out that *'if you tell a neighbor that you are a child protection social worker, then your neighbors will look at you differently. And they see your family, kids differently. And when they see that your kids are dropping stones at small yard. Then they are acting like all the other kids. Is she is supposed to be a social worker! And kids are behaving like that. They see that she should be somehow superhuman or perfect or something else if you are child protection worker. Because as a child protection worker, you tell other parents how to be a good parent. How to treat your children. How to raise them and if you are not perfect yourself, then they see that there is something wrong. And, they are afraid that they are gonna get stalkers, if they tell anyone about their personal life and child protection worker. And...it's true that the child protection clients, of course they may be really angry and the social workers, they get all the hate speech and notes and everything.'*

She raises the question that does in this way, professional's responsibility making their life miserable. In this point, I think the situations, certainly, not entertaining the social workers to work effectively. The situation is not giving the chance to you to exercise the professional duties in a proper way. We, the social workers need to find out, how those misconceptions and misunderstanding of the people can be resolved.



Last year child welfare officials faced all out criticism for a death of 8 year old girl Eerika in Finland (YLE news, 8 July, 2014). Court charged two child protection social worker who were involved in the decision making process of that girl. This was a hot issue for a long time. This kind of issues and its 'stereotyped' and 'one sided' blaming the social workers made the situation more uncomfortable. In the social media, the users 'freestyle' criticisms are also discouraging the social workers, especially who are working in the child protection.

### **7.5 When 'Erotic' media finds social work**

It is very common for the people to engage in a discussion which is sensational and emotions, feelings are touched at the same time. The consumption nature of media is creating the opportunity for the people to get those news as a product. Mass media and social media platforms main goal is to reach to the clients with the best possible ways to engage them with the contents. Here the product always designed as attractive and advertised intelligently.

This way, the maximum reach of the product or content is ensured. Social media channels consumers are the users of those platforms and the users of the media is targeted by maximum reachable products which comes in the way of news, articles, pictures and posts. As Ott and Mack (2010,244) also mentioned that audiences, of course, play a central role in the distinction, as hegemonic pleasures arise from the (passive) consumption of media- its messages and models of identity- by audiences, and resistive pleasures arise from the (active) production of meaning and modes of being by audiences.

In my opinion, there are many of this 'erotic' nature of media presentation easily found in child abuse cases. The examples of child abuse cases and its presentation in media has the 'erotic' view to give the readers pleasure in a way that the abuse becomes a good 'product' to sell. As Hills (1980) cited in Hall et al (2006, 146) mentioned that 'child abuse makes a good copy', it provides not only 'grisly details' but also the ritual humiliation of the social workers failures. It is more shocking indeed when you hear same kind of negative feedback from the social worker who have the experience to work in child protection.

Some social workers saying about the 'social porn' which became one of the buzz word in the social media nowadays. The pictures and messages in the name of 'social porn' tells those issues which are the most discussed issues in the society, community. The online community, social networks especially, became to use to have the words more and more. It's like the 'porn' which is so extremely sensitizing the emotions. Social media

channels, social networks are also more like the ‘social porn’ in terms of their speed and faster reachability in our mind.

Social Worker10 explains the situation and she mentions that sometime it doesn't look so easy to get involved with the social media *‘Have you heard about social porn! Social porn, like sex porn. So, that's the always one topic. Because of course, people's problems. Like we. Reality shows on TV. They based on this kind of issue which are ...societies. We are very interested and how it does now when we ... I always think that if we would have a reality TV show about social work clients. How it might go. I was thinking some time that can it be somehow social pron. When the side effects are real. I have been thinking, how it goes. I don't know. But I would say its not easy going into public discussion as a social work personal. It's not easy. It's a big step.*

In practice, the interactions in the new media platforms happens for many reasons. The willingness to express, share, fun, knowledge and so many things are involved between the relationship of media and audiences or consumers. One of this is pleasure and fantasy. The media pleasure is explained as ‘erotic’ interaction of the consumers. Ott and Mack (2010,241) mentioned that media erotic's explores the array of resistive pleasures that audiences derive from media by examining the various sensuous, creative, and transgressive ways in which persons use and interpret media.

The speed of information and communication and the freedom of choice and expression is also a reason for the increasing connectivity of users in social media channels. It is also a way to express and enjoy freedom of expression. Shirky (2008) cited in Fuchs (2014, 185) argued that to speak online is to publish, and to publish online is to connect with others. This global access to publish the views and opinions in social media are ensuring the right to share the information, enjoy the freedom at the same time. Any activity in social media, connects many more people simultaneously.

## **7.6 Using social media in workplace- a fantasy!**

It is quite inevitable that social media cannot be separated from our everyday life. But what it is when the issue is involved with the workplace. As a social worker how the experience is, as a active person in social media and a active user as a social work too. For me, it's quite a surprise to see that in the current stage of information communication technology, social workers are far away from the social media, which also means they are far from the their clients.

All the respondents of the research found out not using any social media for their work and also in their working place except one. The person using the social media is the responsible person to deal with the social media channel of the organization and working as a youth social worker. The reason here, I see is that, the youths are the most active users of the new media tools and it's definitely a efficient way to get connected with them through social media platforms.

Male student says that *'working time is supposed to be for work and work related duties. I guess everyone uses social media during work time but of course the less the better. Some people might have duties which include using social media - then it is of course another case.'* it tells us actually, the task is not included to get involved with social media. The other social workers answers were quite short like 'not at all'. So, I see this is kind of very far away from the practical social work. Though the use of .....

Time is also a factor when you are busy with all other tasks and not really necessary to use social media during that situation. And, of course, hobbies have nothing to do with the professional responsibility. Social Worker1 points out that *'I think all media, any media is good place. But one of the reasons they don't feel that it's part of their work. Because it's really not part of their work day. It's not usually included to as a work task. So, they should do it on their free time and not all people wanna do it as a hobby, as I do. So, I do understand, they don't have time for it.'*

### **7.7 Don't say anything against the organization!**

We are saying how social workers could use more efficiently social media and increasing the participation of the professionals. But, the experience is not good when you are against your organization. Some time it doesn't matter, even if you are right. But it could be also suicidal in some context. When as a social worker, you are expressing your opinion, you could lose your job. It might happen is the organization recognize it as action against the policy.

Social workers are facing very tough time, when it comes to use it for professional purpose. The 'organizational limitations' or 'employer's consent' is a big hindrance for using it in profession. The lack of training, bureaucratic system, lack of guidelines and organizational rules, systems creating problems, for the social workers regarding the use of social media.

Furthermore, there might come more penalty for this act. Social Worker9 says that *we have to think that what you can write there. If you write a lot some kind of things where your boss or whose employee you are, don't really like it, so you have to soon or late quit it.*

*Well, one year ago, I read from the Facebook that, not my friend, my friends friend got sacked because he wrote some rubbish in Facebook, in case of his work and his boss saw it also. And next Monday he got sacked because of that thing. That guy was pissed off, but what boss was done to him it is. He wrote something like, I hate my job, and boss is asshole. It was big organization, the person was working as officer to manage social media.*

In practice, social workers are facing charges for their voice in social media. Their role in social media is also criticized and punished by the authorities. Stevenson (2014) mentioned that a social worker has been given a 12-month conditions of practice order by the HCPC after posting comments on Facebook about a child protection court case. The actions sometimes gets more penalty even though the statement is correct. Social workers could lose job and face charges for their opinions in the social media. Schraer (2015) mentioned that a social worker has been brought before the regulator for allegedly trolling David Cameron in a series of expletive-filled tweets. The case against the social worker stated that his tweets constituted misconduct and this Social worker hauled before regulator for ‘trolling’ David Cameron.

### **7.8 Personal and professional life in social media**

Personally individual experience of social media is quite promising in Finland. The technological tools and new media platforms have active user in Finland. It's very common that people are connected with the information communication technology. Social worker<sup>8</sup> thinks it should be very personal. She explains that *‘I want to keep my private life separate from my working life. Maybe if I working in a different employer, I might use it as a employer.* It is emphasized by Voshel and Wesala (2015,68) and mentioned that though the official standards of the social work profession may struggle to keep pace with the ever-evolving presence of social media in our lives, social workers must be proactive by being mindful of their ethical and professional responsibilities.

In everyday life, IT and social media tools are very common for the social workers. Male student mentions that *‘Yes, it seems to be natural part of the day. However, during e.g. fishing trips where IT/Internet is not available life goes on quite nicely too.’* But this is not same in working place an. Social Worker<sup>4</sup> says that *‘people can find out about your personal life, which is not the thing you mostly want your clients to see.’*

The people who are using social media in their everyday lives has the same opinion that they feel they need it. The users are satisfied with their relation with the social media tools. The users of social media channels have a feelings of being happy and the

intimacy with the other people in the virtual space. It indicates also the satisfaction of the users. The users finds 'joy' and 'satisfaction' by using the social media channels. As Curran et al (2011) cited in Juntti-Henriksson (2014, 142) mentioned that the previous research shown that people find joy and satisfaction in using social media.

Social worker<sup>10</sup> says that *'if I would be braver, I have, I can see a lot of possibilities that I would like to create a Facebook only connected to my profession. Like another Facebook page which would not be private and I could do it as a social worker put more this kind of things, which I am doing in private life. And I could give stronger opinions or tell how I would like the things should be done. There would be a lot of possibilities. But somehow, I am quite a long confusion that I am working in this kind of public organization. Is it good, necessary for me or not.'*

About the professional responsibility and use of social media Voshel and Wesala (2015,70) mentioned that with so much information at one's fingertips, it can be tempting for a social worker to use the Internet in a way that violates the fundamental tenets of the social work profession. There is nothing to stop social workers from Googling clients except their own ethical awareness and resolve; which can be reinforced and solidified by having social media guidelines/policies in their organizations. Social Worker<sup>9</sup> wants to separate the working life always from the personal space. He says that *'Because I want to give work, me and my personal life separated. Maybe it will be so different, if share everything about every side of my life. if I would share now like I am work, now I am at meeting, at park, it's not. I think it's not good thing.'*

## **7.9 Guidelines are necessary for social media**

The guidelines are not clear among the social workers and the motivation about the use of social media is also not there. Professionals are also not comfortable due to fear of personal attack, negative publicity and bad comments on social media. Megele (2014) opined that Rather than thinking of social media as a teaching tool, it can be used to create a culture of continuous improvement. Social media offers opportunities to model diverse practices, develop personal learning networks, and to establish a rich and inclusive learning process.

In Finland we don't have any kind of specific guidelines to use social media. The situation is not better in other countries too. In this context Schraer (2015) mentioned that of 151 UK councils responding to a freedom of information request, 124 had a formal social media policy. But only two of these had any tailored guidance for people working with vulnerable children and adults. So, less than 2 percent of councils in Britain provides social

media guidance for the social workers and most social workers feel social media in itself is not a bad thing – like anything, it's how it's used that matters.

Due to lack of guidelines social workers are not getting involved with the new media platforms. In this situation, a clear and specific guideline about social media is necessary. Social worker<sup>5</sup> says, *'It might be the workload that they have, lack of time, lack of self-confidence and the fear that they might step beyond the confidentiality or lose their jobs, as they have to be loyal to their employers.'*

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) have developed Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice to create a uniform document for the profession. According to the guidelines of NASW and ASW (2005) the specific goals of the standards are to maintain and improve the quality of technology-related services provided by social workers, to serve as a guide to social workers incorporating technology into their services, to help social workers monitor and evaluate the ways technology is used in their services, to inform clients, government regulatory bodies, insurance carriers, and others about the professional standards for the use of technology in the provision of social work services.

The joint guideline (2005,4) says that several critical issues need to be addressed: many technologies are powerful but fragile; crucial information can be lost or intercepted; not all Web sites providing information are reliable; service providers can easily misrepresent themselves and their credentials online; confidentiality in an electronic medium can quickly evaporate; jurisdiction, liability and malpractice issues blur when state lines and national boundaries are crossed electronically; numerous digital divides can thwart access and success; and clients and social workers alike may have unrealistic expectations for what a technology can actually provide.

Social worker need to know the how to do it systematically, to maintain good practice and the proper use of social media in the working place. As social Worker<sup>10</sup> says that *'I need some kind of person to tell me how it goes and to do. Somebody who tell me, how in public organization, as a representative officer of the public organization, what are the good rules or topics to share, like good practices. You can avoid certain issues.'*

## 8 What is the role of social workers ensuring better client service by using social media?

### 8.1 Social workers in Finland are typical 'Finnish'

If we consider the use of social media by the social work professionals than it's very frustrating. The use and the influence on social media is very low. From the answers we can easily find a place where we see, the social workers, are not 'social' in terms of using and being active in social media. They are conscious but not active or 'social' in new media platforms.

Social Workers usually not active in social media. In Finland, it's quite rare to see social workers voice in social media. Recent times some blogs and active users in social networking sites are performing well. Many social workers started to motivate to tell their stories, opinions on the issues of the society.

The tradition to be silent and not to be in publicly expressed too much is also seen in the experiences of social media. The social worker's opinion about the use of new media and digital tools for their work are not visible when it comes to inform the people, in general. Why it's so, social workers don't want to express their opinion in public. Social Worker1 has some thought about it. She says that *'Maybe, it's also something very Finnish. Typical for Finnish people. We see that we, our private life is really important, private and not to be in publicity with. May Finns don't like publicity and they think it's too public if they share anything about their ideas or anything from their head to social media.'*

In this area, the social work professionals have so much to do. I think, it's not really like a Finnish way to be silent but it's quite similar. The situation is also same in other places. Social workers in other countries have the same problem of not being in the online community and in the social media to speak about the profession.

The reason behind the lower presentation in the social media is also the relation and engagement of social workers. Social Worker9 pointed out that *'At the moment, social work and social media are so separated. I think the only way to get nearer to each other is important to integrate. Because it cannot be so separate nowadays. So, there huge need for that.'*

Finnish social workers Female student opined that the barrier to use the social media is related with the workload and too much responsibility. She says that *'time is a barrier since most of the time they are busy with other practical issues. Also inadequate knowledge on how to use it and lack of interest.'*

It is very much possible to produce content from the perspective of social work profession and social worker and write on the facts social workers are working. The 'social matters' could be easily discussed in blog, social networks, videos could be shared. I think, in this way broader public 'image' building might help.

## 8.2 Positive image building is necessary

It's true that whatever the situation of social media and digital platforms presents, the responsibility comes to the social workers. Professionals have to make their way through the new media tools so that people can get the actual picture of the profession and not rely on those rumor and inappropriate image there. Social workers need to get involved actively to say our thoughts. Blogs, posts in social media is really effective in this case. Even, its going to awake the social workers to say out loud about their profession. Because

Sharing the positive aspects of social work and the work we are doing are necessary to inform to people. Social worker<sup>5</sup> things that the way to improve the situation and create better public image social workers need to be active there. She mentioned that *'To be openly critical to the issues that they face in their work, to be ethically aware that they bring forth the social realities that are always not as simple as 'traditional' media sometimes suggests.'*

Here Social Worker<sup>8</sup> opined that it's possible by openness about the profession. She mentioned that *'By being open about our profession, informing people about benefits and relevant legislation'* When the social media is changing the voice, the social workers also explained that the voice of the social workers are also possible to raise and heard. It will help to build 'positive image' of the profession and also the professionals in social work field.

Social Worker<sup>9</sup> says that *'social workers can tell people what is the other side of the story. That way people might understand. Because if you haven't been in contact with something then you can't just talk from your limited knowledge and without knowing the whole things and surroundings.'*

To take part in those interactions in social media and the involvement of social workers certainly helps to construct a better image about the profession. Why this press reporting is important for social work and in the digital media tools! Franklin and Patron (2001) cited in Hall et al (2006, 145) pointed it out nicely. They argued that the press reporting of social work is considered to have an important effect on the way in which social work is talked about at all levels, helping to shape the public mood, the political debate, social



workers' morale and even the ways in which social workers relate to their clients. From that opinion, we have also a big role to shape public mood and construct the better image of social work among the other people and professionals.

What could be done in this situations- Social worker1 explained and mentioned that *'I think you shouldn't go there and read those negative feedbacks of work during the evenings. And, many times you should focus on, more on positive things, creating that positivity around social work in social media. Of course, the criticism is important. If you think and find it and you can handle some kind of critic online and for example take some of the negative feedback and explain social work side in that situation in that social work client. For example. Telling that this was wrong and this was, if you can explain why does the way it does without violating the law. Then it's really good. But you can't always do that. Without violating the law of secrecy that you are not telling about your specific client but in overall social work.'*

### **8.3 Effective relationship between clients and the social work**

The social workers as individual are closely connected with the internet and digital media. Experiences of social workers tells the importance of communication technology in their everyday life. The image what we see in the online community could be defined as a development of 'self -constructed' identity (Castells (2014) where the in the virtual world, individuals are communicating with another individual, not introducing their actual identity.

Identifying and understanding of social media relations with social worker in different forms. In fact, we cannot escape from the communication as a social being, individual, social worker or in any other identity. According to Fuchs (2014, 242), communication is an essential feature of human society. There can be no society without communication; human create and maintain social relationships by communication and thereby continuously reproduce their social existence. Media, such as the internet, are a means of communication. They are tools that enable the production of communication and human sociality. Means of communication, like nature, education, love, care, knowledge, technology, affects, entertainment, language, transportation, housing, food, cities, cultural goods and traditions etc.

Social worker9 has a good solution where he emphasized to reduce the gap and improve the relationship among the social workers and clients. The use of social media here, could play a vital role. He mentioned that *'I think that the best way is that don't take the social*

*media as your enemy, take it as your friend. So, if it's your friend, you can work with that. If it's like your enemy, it's very hard to work with something what you really hating about. So, social media is not your enemy and those things what is written there that's only the one side story. And you know, what the other side of the story is. It would be very important to that to write it down in social media also. It would be a very good time that social work could also closely connected with the social media.'*

Sometimes it is worth to think on the perspective of the clients. The clients or the service user's perspective can help to improve the understanding of the social workers and develop their professional role. About the relationship based work practice, Ruch et al (2010,21) argued that this allows practitioners to keep in touch with both their thoughts and feelings about the relationship and to be alert to not only the cognitive but also the affective responses which inform how the uniqueness, risk and uncertainty that characterize all social work relationships are addressed.

While discussing the relationship of social workers and the clients and the development of relationship Compton and Galaway (1989, 279) mentioned that the professional relationship is an affective experimental interaction should develop as necessary to the task.

Here the participation of both parties, the professionals and the clients is essential. Participatory interaction in the social media platforms explained by Rheingold (2000) cited in Shao (2008), and mentioned that beyond social interaction, people's participation may also contribute to the formation and maintenance of virtual communities on user-generated sites. Virtual communities form when people carry on public discussions long enough with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships.

#### **8.4 Why ethical challenges are so crucial for social media use?**

Social work is working for the welfare of the people who are clients. It is the most priority to help, to protect the client's rights and ensure best services for them. Here, when we are talking about the social media, the very important question comes, how to maintain those in online community. In general thought, for me even sometime it comes whether it is really possible to follow the same principles of social work profession while I am in social media. For me, it is a big challenge to carefully deal with. When I was interviewing social workers people have clear concern about the possibilities of social media use and protect the clients. In social media, the openness have several things to with this client's rights. As, we already see social work

associations and governing bodies have introduced some guidelines of social media usage. But it is, a big question for the social workers too. When you don't have a clear idea how the client's confidentiality, privacy and other issues will be covered in the free space of social media.

Social media is providing the platform for effective practice in social work profession. But the ethical and effective use is also a big concern. According to Matthew (2011) social media give us a no-cost, readily accessible, grassroots-to-global platform to alert, educate, mobilize, and improve the world around us. Social media arguably constitute one of the most important cultural milestones in the last half-century. Similarly he also pointed out the misuse of social media practice by the social workers and mentioned that the problem is equally clear: When social workers misuse these tools, they can irreparably harm clients, sabotage their own careers, and cast a long shadow over our profession. So, it becomes more important to take care the proper use and to maintain professional ethical standards.

According to Social worker<sup>6</sup> the safety of information is the big issue in social media. She says *'We can't discuss client matters in social media, it's not safe. We cannot guarantee that these connections are safe.'* It is true that when we are discussing the issue there, it comes in mind that how to say it there and how the information of the clients will be safe. In a way it might go against the client and become a reason of possible danger for their personal life. Social Worker<sup>5</sup> says that *'Confidentiality of the clients' privacy, they have to remain anonymous and their security have to be ensured. Social workers have to consider also that they do not rebuild stereotypical images of clients and social issues.'* Misuse of information and confidentiality is big ethical challenge seen by the social other social workers too. The fear is that, it might easily spread and the information could be twisted with the inappropriate things where it might harm even the social worker or the person who is writing those in social media.

In practical life, social workers have to follow the rules and regulations regarding the work where it clearly says how to deal with certain problems and issues of clients. Social Worker<sup>9</sup> reminds that *'for example, in my work, we are mainly following law. This is our main book, lastensuojelulaki. If you are not working or if you haven't worked in child protection or you haven't read the laws. it's impossible to know what workers are doing, and how.'*

The secrecy could be seen in a different way where the ethical dilemmas could be solved easily. If it is the issue to serve the clients and help them, then not using the social media could be the privacy issue. Ethically it should be like to engage in social media and speak on behalf of them. Social Worker<sup>1</sup> says that *'I feel that sometimes social workers don't*

*follow their ethical lines, ethical codes when they decide not to use media. Because we have a ethical code which clearly says that we need to inform policymakers and publicity, and other decision makers about social problems of our area and if social services are not good enough. The quality of service is not good enough, we don't have enough resources for helping people and people don't get the services that they are legally should get. So, we have a ethical code which shares that we should try to do some kind of intervention there. But they don't do it.'* Here the reason comes out the fear of violating the secrecy and confidentiality. If the situation goes wrong, then it's the social worker who is going to be blamed.

The fact is that, the responsibility to influence the discussion, social workers need to participate in the process of sharing information and influence the debate, policies. The discussion of the power and the media presentation of social work depends on the media productions and the audiences as well. As in social media, the users of different platforms produce their thoughts, shares it to communicate with the others. According to Shao (2008), the individual's deals with the user generated media contents in the social media platforms 'by consuming, by participating and by producing'.

### **8.5 How to ensure better client service?**

As, our profession's main and only goal is the client and their wellbeing, it is also necessary to think how our role in social media affecting the services. It is very common nowadays, in social and health services specially to use the information technology. It's also same in other services as well. Different information technology solutions are successfully contributing the clients. Digital communication tools made the services faster and cost effective. The information about certain issues became more accessible. As its reducing the gaps of distances and different kind services are accessible, even from far away through the help of information technology. Social worker 5 says that *'some of the networks can provide a forum for clients to connect from distance, for example issues on national/international level as people often struggle with similar issues in different places.'*

The electronic format and online services are already using to provide health and welfare services in Finland. Social Worker<sup>8</sup> mentions the services providing in Lapland area and also in Finland via online and electronic format. Where she told about the online service portal (Virtu.fi) that offers electronic services to support well-being of the citizens. The municipalities of Lapland introduced the services especially for the people living in those areas. And also the national archive of health information (Kanta-arkisto) is a electronic

service for the citizens. She said that *'there are many services which are on also in internet. And more time goes everything will be transformed to electric services. For example, Virtu and Kanta-arkisto etc.'*

The youth services and social work with the younger generation is a good example to use social media. One of the main reason of this is, i think the user engagement with the digital tools. As the young generation is much more active user for the social media and different digital networks it would be easier to reach them here. Female student explains that *'it could be useful to get closer to youths by talking to them about things like behavior change on social media. Also creating awareness on danger of certain things like smoking.'*

By speaking on behalf of the clients, the social workers actually contributing to improve the services for the clients. This is thought by the Social worker1. She says that *'freedom of expression and freedom of speech of social workers helps the client's because they are speaking on behalf of the clients. They are speaking for the client's rights, services. The topics the social workers writing are advocacy, which they are expressing. When there is lack of resources and clients don't get enough but they should have. They speak about those. That's how it helps the clients.'* Though it's true that limitation of appropriate knowledge and communication problems makes the situation uncomfortable for both parties. Where clients think their rights violated and the social workers doing their job according to the procedures and professional rules, regulations.

## **8.6 Why changes are necessary for citizen's wellbeing?**

The wellbeing of the clients is the utmost priority of the social work profession. So, the very beginning of every action of the social workers in the digital media platforms, using internet communication technology is directed for the welfare of the clients as well as the citizens. The situation is changing day by day as more and more social workers are contributing their effort to engage with the social media. The changes in some cases already visible concerning the service improvement and ensuring citizens wellbeing. I see the hope when, the social workers are more optimistic about the effective use of media for the benefit of clients. Because social work profession is for the clients.

In Finland different blogs like Sosiaalinentekijä, Perusasiat and some others getting more attention of social work professionals as well as other people. In the social media channels, there are many pages, groups created and there active users are promising. But the social work professionals thinks that In Finland more social workers need to be active and

stronger voice needed to influence the policies. Social workers can influence the decision makers and politicians to address the needs, develop more resources, and improve the services. Social workers active role here in social media and advocacy could easily accelerate the welfare of the citizens.

Social worker<sup>1</sup> says that *'we need more social workers, for doing it. It's not enough that ten social workers are doing it in whole Finland. They are more and more active all the time. And they read social related blogs a lot. And they sometimes write blog as well. But not enough. We need those social workers in every city.'* She is optimistic and mentioned that the situation is improving and changes are already visible. But it need to increase more. She says, *'you need different perspective to understand. Nowadays different social policy, they are cutting down the services, they are cutting down the resources. Social workers really needs clients help. How it affects the services, how the cutting down the services and resources effects to citizens lives.'*

The participatory culture in the user generated media allows the users to interact each other with different contents. In this context the social media became alternative source of media power. It's also related with participatory democracy. Jenkins (2008) cited in Fuchs (2014, 54) argued that participatory culture as culture 'in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content'. It also involves 'participants who interact with each other'.

Here, the influential power of social workers will help to construct a positive environment to ensure the increased benefit of the clients. Social worker's role and relations properly expressed by Payne (2005, 162). He argued that communications involves understanding how human beings use language individually and in social relations to give social meaning to particular views of the world. Power relations derive from the use of language to construct a view of the world which, if socially accepted, influences others. People such as social workers use language in this way to influence clients, which means that the processes through which they do so give power over clients. I also think that there is no alternative for the social work professionals to stay away from the digital tools and usage of technology in practice. It should be a priority in the current context of information technology and the rise social media.

## **9 Social construction of media knowledge: theoretical perspective**

The new knowledge in the social work profession is to get accustomed about the use of information communication technology. In a more exact way, to use new media or social media technologies for the benefit of social work profession as well as for the clients, to ensure better professional service and practice. The social worker's understanding and the knowledge in the field of social media platforms and their use will let us know the thoughts of social workers. The skill needed for the information communication technology usage and also the abilities to work with those technological tools are essential to know. The theoretical perspective for this study is chosen the social constructionist view.

The social aspect is in the very heart of social work profession. In every feature, the 'social' is the most important to the social work professionals. while discussing about the 'social', Adams et al (2009,6) mentioned that Increasingly, we use the word 'wellbeing' to refer to something wider than welfare, to describe a consistent experience in an individual, family or community that they are happy in themselves and that the life they lead is satisfying and worthwhile. This sense of their lives being worthwhile derives from people feeling that their relationships with the people and the social institutions around them are good and that they are making a useful contribution to aspects of social life that are important to them. Payne (2005, 164) argues that the social construction of reality emphasizes that shared social constructions contribute to the socialization of individuals into society and into social groups within society, to the extent that social ideas are so widely shared that they become a form of reality to participants in that society.

### **9.1 Social' relations**

The 'social' aspects in social work and argued that practicing to achieve solidarity and equality in society requires an understanding and commitment to the 'social', Adams et al (2009) mentioned. They also described 'social' aspects in different things. According to them, the social, as an area of experience or study, is concerned with the experience of human beings, human beings lives cooperatively in groups, social is the relationships between human beings and the traits and skills. At the same time, they also mentioned that society is the complete set of relationships, including cultural, personal and social relationships that form the human social environment in which human beings live. Social work focuses on and works with all these aspects of the social. It needs to be taken care of, the responsibility to uphold the professionalism and ensure proper practice in regards of all the social aspects.

The 'social' which says to connect, cooperate, communicate is also very true in the information technology and the communication. In this new technology centered world, the responses for the cooperation with society, social institutions and so on, also necessary from the social work as well. The 'social' in the technology and media, demands the same commitment and understanding from the social work profession. According to Van Dijk (2013) cited in Fuchs (2014) argued that the very word 'social' associated with media implies that platforms are user centered and that they facilitate communal activities, just as the term 'participatory' emphasizes human collaboration. Indeed, social media can be seen as online facilitators or enhancers of human networks-webs of people that promote connectedness as a social value.

The social worker's knowledge and experience with the information communication technology and the relationships between technology and the profession will lead us to the new commitment to work for the society in a new way. With a high penetration of information technology and usage of IT Finland is linked with the 'social' aspects of the technology, more widely. In this structure, the new construction of knowledge of the social workers and social work profession about the information communication technology and new media or social media platforms, is very much necessary.

The understanding of new media technologies, in the global as well as in the context of Finland, needs to be clearly done for the wellbeing of society. As the issue of social media technologies influencing the society, social relationships, institutions, cultural structure, power and so many things. It will bring the chances to acquire new knowledge, about the social relationships which is centered by new media or social media tools.

Social work grow up and develop as the emergence of industrial, technology and scientific revolutions and it influenced by the new knowledge and values of the society. These changes brought so many possibilities for the social work profession to understand the human nature and reflect on the new social world. Machlup (1962) and Bell (1973) mentioned the revolutionary changes in society due to information technology and argues that the social changes developed in the consequences of the industrial society and communication systems. DiMaggio et al (2001) citing Machlup and Bell argued that in the 1960s, students of social change suggested that in the face of new developments in communications technology, industrial society would yield to the "information society," with consequences in every institutional realm. He points out that the social impact of digital communications first came in the thought of Bell (*ibid*), where he argued that electronic communications and the network will be the central part of the in the new postindustrial society.



He also mentioned that Bell and others theoretical perspective, points out about the influence of internet and communication technology in the society. Castells (2004, 8) pointed out that the informationalism is the technological paradigm that constitutes the material basis early twenty first century societies. According to him, as information and communication are the most fundamental dimensions of human activity and organization, a revolutionary change in the material conditions of their performance affects the entire realm of human activity.

DiMaggio et al (2001) argued that from the Marxian and Weberian traditions come concerns about power and inequality in the access to the new technology. The Durkheimian perspective sensitizes us to the new media's impact on community and social capital. The work of Habermas and Calhoun leads us to ask how the Internet may alter the practice of politics. The Weberian tradition raises the question of the effect of Internet technology on bureaucracy and economic institutions. Critical theory raises important questions of how the Internet may affect the arts and entertainment media.

There are different explanations about the social relationships in the society. Though the central point of view is the human being. In which, it says the activity of human being in the society. Sociality termed as social relations by Max weber. According to weber (1978) cited in Fuchs (2014,39), the term 'social relationships' will be used to denote the behavior of a plurality of actors insofar as, in its meaningful content, the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented to these terms'

## **9.2 New Knowledge**

The understanding and processes in the society changes with the social change which is influenced by the knowledge. While representing the new relations and changes of the society terming as 'social construction' Payne (2005, 15) mentioned that social construction is the postmodernist idea. He argues that it changes in the way in which we think about our societies and the way in which we create and understand knowledge. As Payne points about the social changes happening by the assimilation of knowledge, we see the social processes also adapting by that new thoughts. Social activity gradually becomes a part of our habit which we share with the other individuals in the community as well and that creates the wider participation in those activities in the society. This happens due to our knowledge and understanding of the reality of the social interaction and relationships. Institutionalizing the reality in legislation and social structure gives it new social meaning.

In the technology and social media, it is becoming our habitual part and new understanding developing by the media interactions. It is also changing the new meaning of the social relationships and based on reality, it is shaping the society. When the knowledge is gradually constructing the new ideas and meaning of social activities, it has become an integral part of the whole social life or sociality. Manuel Castells is the most discussed expert in the communication and technology arena. According to Castells (2004, 24) we may say that the most important influence in today's world is the transformation of people's minds. If so, then, the media are the key networks, as the media, organized in global oligopolies and their distributive networks are the primary source of messages and images that reach people's minds.

In its presentation of sociality, Fuchs pointed out that the next is the Ferdinand Tönnies (1988) view of 'sociality as community'. He argues that 'the very existence of *Gemeinschaft* (community) rests in the consciousness of belonging together and the affirmation of the condition of mutual dependence', whereas *Gesellschaft* (society) for him is a concept in which 'reference is only to the objective fact of a unity based on common traits and activities and other external phenomena'. And, the last is the co-operative work of sociality. Marx and Engels (1846) mentioned the social as the cooperation of different individuals. They argued that by social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, nor industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force'. (Fuchs.2014, 40.)

Within the interaction through social media, the social workers new understanding of the technological tools, will help them to identify and follow up the social relationships and the other facts of society which is advancing with the social media platforms and the new technologies. According to Williams & Edge (1996, 866) technological change is also a social process. They mentioned that every stage in the generation and implementation of new technologies involves a set of choices between different technical options. Alongside narrowly 'technical' considerations, a range of 'social' factors affect which options are selected - thus influencing the content of technologies, and their social implications.

At present, in the social work profession, this new knowledge production is as necessary as the development and advancement of the profession. The changing nature of the social relationships and interactions followed by the big influence of digital technologies and social media, demands to integrate the new media and professional responsibility. As Van

Dijk (2006, 29) argued that the networks also cause a comprehensive restructuring of society at large. They are breaking old modes of organization as they help organizations in their search for new scale levels, new markets and new ways to govern and control.

New knowledge and meaning of the words are inherited in the interactions and relations of social workers and the social aspects of technology, more precisely, new technological tools or social media. Perron et al (2010, 71) mentioned that the social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships. ICTs play a major role in human relationships, which has implications for social work practice. More specifically, increasing numbers of people are engaged in relationships that are mediated by some form of ICT, including electronic messages (email), SMS text message, social networking (e.g., Facebook), instant messaging service, or video chat (e.g., Skype). Social workers need to have an understanding of the roles that such ICTs may play in the lives of their clients. This may involve understanding how communication processes are different compared to face-to-face interactions; such as the use of emoticons – that is, characters and symbols use to express non-verbal. It could be, to get it on the right way and to direct the right way to reach its goal, the most important would be to get close with it and ensure its proper use.

### **9.3 New meanings**

Technological tools and different methods of implementation for the service, also guide the professional practice. The social work is all, for the society, and for the clients. Social work practice and the profession as well as the education in this field will have the potential outcome, with these new knowledge. In Finland the use of new technology and social media for the profession and client's service asks for more integration with each other. Historically the power is also a big reason to govern the society and determine the policies to initiate and develop. In the social work profession, the voice of the profession as well the clients have huge potentiality to go through the use of social media. Social media, could lead the voice heard in more widely than the mass media or traditional media. The social policies and the other decision making processes needs to be integrated with the principles, values of social work profession and also for the welfare of people.

When we look at the human relationships and interaction with the information technology and the social media, then it also reflects the relations in every human interaction, which says the points out the formation of social capital. Internet and communication technology is shaping different areas of human activities in the society. Lin and Wellman

(2001) cited in DiMaggio et al (2001) mentioned that many scholars believe that the Internet facilitates the creation of social capital and other public goods by making information flow more efficiently through residential or professional communities. Putnam (2000) cited in DiMaggio pointed out that, after demographic controls, Internet users are no different than non-users on measures of civic engagement. According to DiMaggio, however, that it is premature to project this result onto future user cohorts, and he is agnostic about the Internet's contribution to social capital at the community level.

All we need to do is to concentrate in communication. Whatever the communication tools are, social work always follows the communication skills. It is not possible to go further in professional responsibility in social work, the prime reason, may be because of communication. In social work profession, most neglected appreciation and bad portrayed identity, we get from the media which presents a cruel public image about social work and social workers. Which constructing the public perception about services, social workers roles and what people think about their roles could be, which might not or mostly not the exact what they should do. In people's eye, media always constitutes an unhealthy professional outlook of social work. Public image of social work and the social worker is in deep of the discussion for a long time. The media picturization of social work is frustrating, considering the profession and the services of social work. It has the same characteristics, irrespective of places and areas of social work practice.

The idea of social construction comes from the work of the sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1971). They maintain that, in social affairs as opposed to the natural world, 'reality' is social knowledge which guides our behavior, but we all have different views of it. We arrive at shared views of reality by sharing our knowledge through various social processes which organize it and make it objective. The emergence of social media in the relationship based practice in social work is highlighted by the social work professionals. Turner (2015) argued it as the new type of 'relationship based practice'. He mentioned that, far from creating the alienation for which social networking is often held accountable, for me Twitter has created opportunities for knowledge exchange, partnership, collaboration and creativity. From that viewpoint of engagement with the social media technologies, we get a particular insight about the new meaning of those tools in professional practice.

Social work is developing through the practice of different aspects of the professional knowledge and skill. The values and new knowledge is also redesigning the social world of social work. In the human relationships and interactions, society is continuously constructing the new meaning of certain developments. In which, new media tools or social

media technologies influenced the processes in a diverse way. The participation and practices constructing the new dimensions of society as well as social work. So, in social work, the new communication tools, the technology and social aspect is the priority in this technology centered world of communication.

Social workers have to be ready to adopt the social part of the technology and media communications tools. Sapey (1997,807) argues that the social workers are used to analyzing a range of issues as communication problems—it is in the nature of a profession that is based upon the personal interactions of trained practitioners with people with various forms of need that communication becomes one of the more fundamental areas of knowledge and skills. It is also reflective of that knowledge base that what social work has to offer to the analysis of a range of problems is to see the scope for communication as a means for their resolution. We can say that the interactive participation in the information communication technology enhanced the communication with the clients, providing support to ensure the wellbeing of the society in general. Particularly, bridging both the sides, profession and services and on the other hand, the clients and service users.

In the power and decision making process, the influence of social media tools are not ignored at all. The engagement in the media sphere, makes it visible to the understanding of power in the society. Increased and active participation of people makes it to reflect on the decisions, taken for the citizens, which we can say, other way for the social work clients as well as for the people. The rights of the citizens, the law and regulations are there for consideration to modify and redesign. Civic movements (for example rights of same-sex people in Finland) and different citizens' initiative for the rights are developing in the social media platforms and raising voice for the welfare of the society.

As Payne (2005,174) mentioned that the change is going all the time, but knowing how we can make a difference is an important part of having agency, that is, an impact on things as they change. With all these interactions, social relationships and professional practices, we get the new appreciation of thoughts, in the new situations.

## 10 Theoretical remarks and discussion

New technological developments day by day getting more space in our everyday lives. The use of all these networking tools have a great role to bring positive changes in the society where the users of social media and the other people can interact easily, faster and effectively. In the same way to stay connected with the social media tools, could increase the professional capacity of social workers. The main goal to ensure the clients of social work or the people in the society have the high opportunity to get the effective service.

Though there are so many opportunities of using social media and new technological tools it is becoming more challenging too. In modern technological world, media is also a part of consumer lives where it's a part of economy. New innovations of technologies are also creating the ways for product marketing, business. The development of commercial products are also modifying according to the needs, choices, wishes of people engaged with the new technological tools and social media platforms. In this way the user's interaction, content generation and sharing all these are also becoming a part of product in social media and technologies commodity business. The users of social media in a way also a part of making profit for the certain technology owners and the service providers.

Society is ongoing with so any changes due to the effect of technological development and the rise of network society. Castells (2014) mentioned that meaningful, conscious communication is what makes humans human. Thus, any major transformation in the technology and organization of communication is of utmost relevance for social change. Over the last four decades the advent of the Internet and of wireless communication has shifted the communication process in society at large from mass communication to mass self-communication. He emphasized his thoughts which explains the connection of technologies and the development of network. His ideas are connected with the bonding of human being due to network and communication.

Personally, I am following different social media channels every day and I also belong in different groups, pages where social workers are interacting, sharing many issues related with social work. Most of those groups are formed for the Finnish social workers and professionals in this sector. I can see a lot of everyday discussion are taking place in those groups, but surprisingly those are not becoming interested to answer this questionnaire. All the discussions were in Finnish, so I approached several times by posting my questionnaire again, with apologies. But the results were not impressive. I did posted the online questionnaire in some Facebook pages, where different organization, service providers (public and private) are channeling information and other issues. From there I have got one

respondent. In those situations, I have found out that the prospective respondents language and speak it out in English was the difficult one. People might have interested if it was been doing in Finnish. As I have observed in those online discussions, there were some students/researchers asking to answer some questions in similar topics. Members were found, quite active and interested in those. Besides, other in the discussion topics people were giving their opinion and many cases, those discussion were longer. The topics there, includes social work and social workers as well as social policy, political issues.

While about the response from the social workers was not impressive in twitter. It got some attention from the social work professionals, who are active in Twitter. But in every case, sometime tweets got retweeted, which in practically was not successful to get the respondents for the questionnaire. So, at some point I was a bit disappointed about the situation of data collection. As I was expecting more people could answer the online questionnaire, from different parts of Finland. Unfortunately it didn't happen.

In my opinion, one reason could be the topic itself asks more to say and descriptive, the respondents have to respond with more thoughts. Because the overall design was to give space to the respondents so that they can express more about their experiences, opinions, stories in a broader way. But it is true that the online questionnaire doesn't answer all questions, in a broad way. So, it seems that the length of questionnaire, duration of the answering period, and understanding of the language are the main reasons.

Here in this study, the sex ratio says, the maximum of the respondents are female social workers. It was not designed as to find out the opinions and experiences of the female social workers. Wajcman (2004, 69) argued that in cyberspace all physical, bodily cues are removed from communication. As a result, our interactions are fundamentally different, because they are not subject to judgments based on sex, age, race, voice, accent or appearance but are based on textual exchanges. The medium of communication in ICT blurs the gap of men and women in cyberspace as the information world is not necessarily directs to a men's or women's specifically.

Gender is an important part of the discussion of the information systems. The gender sensitive approaches are essential to be taken care of, as suggested by experts. Isomäki & Pohjola (2005,19) argued that the gender system is an essential factor in this virtual social order, in which the question of inclusion and exclusion has been negotiated by a quite traditional understanding of division of labor, and where acting human beings are primarily thought to be men. As a part of social system, it is very much necessary to make the whole process effective and participatory. The virtual world where the technology is playing vital

role and gender perspective is more important. In this light, the gap between the users and non-users of information technology and social media needs to be understood. Even, in the same level of generalized ICT centered life in Finland, the relation of social media in gender specific issues determine the use of ICT and its effects in social relationships, mainly in the virtual reality.

But in this research, practically the number of social workers responded, majority were female. It also indicates the social workers gender representation in Finland. In social work education in the universities the number of female students is more than the male students. In this study of social media, the picture also portrayed in the same way. Moreover, the gender perspective and feminist thought in media and social work influenced the discussion.

Another aspect is the relation of technology and the environment, particularly social media. As we see, in the society, the connectivity, information, technology and nowadays social media is the integral part of our life. In this context, the use of technology and social media could accelerate the development of green social work if, it is defined under the green social ideas. Climate change, environmental degradation and all these issues are well maintained with the help of technology and social media. Unfortunately, Dominelli (2012), in her Green social work thought, didn't mention anything about the relation of technological changes and tools, and their possible use in the social work. How the social media and new technological platforms are effectively contributing the development of green social work, has not given emphasized. Hassan (2002, 47) mentioned the relations of network society as 'virtual ecology' and argued that what this virtual presence of more than one billion people constitutes is a larger virtuality, a virtual environment or virtual ecology. Again, the virtual ecology of the network is a 'real virtuality' because it involves real individuals who constitute part of it and works in tandem with digital systems on the reality of the concrete world to change and shape it.

The theory and especially the right references for the analysis was quite hard to manage. Most of the time i was looking for more resources in Finnish social work perspective. It is true that the study of social media in social practice and related fields are not enough. Again, there are some literature which are basically in local language, Finnish. So, when i was looking for more local information in Finnish perspective it was not so successful. But, of course it did not became obstacle to do this research. As we already observed that the social workers relation with social media is not significantly represented. This is also reflecting the overall situation. One thing, I should say, my previous study in social work and being a student



from South Asia, was also important behind this research. The reason is, i was really expecting that in Finland, there will be a lot of studies found concerning technology, society and social media. It was because i had previous impression to look Finland as a country of technology influenced society. So, i was interested to see how this is working with the social work profession. This research is a master's thesis, so there are limitations of extended discussion. But I want to consider it as the foundation of more detailed research from different perspective.

After completing this research, i became more confident about my abilities to conduct a qualitative research. It was a challenging task to find appropriate theory and methods to integrate with the data. I have spent more time doing the analysis part. The right approach and method for the analysis and reflecting the data was the crucial factor. Because, here it's most important in the qualitative study, to represent the research in those analysis. The voices of the interview respondents must be shown the mirror in the analysis. I am confident, that this study gave the opportunity to learn and exercise all those things. At the same time, i am happy that i have learned too much during the whole research. For me, this is the most important part of my study.

## 11 Recommendations and further research

As time goes, the new changes and new technological development will take place. As Voshel and Wesala (2015, 75) argued that technology will become more advanced and challenges will become more daunting. We need to heed this call to action and move to create an atmosphere where vulnerable clients are protected, and where practitioners strive to maintain professional and personal boundaries so that some sense of normalcy can be maintained in their individual lives.

Social workers are the leaders of change in the society. The practice of social work professionals should be integrated with the necessity of new media platforms. Social work can protect the client from 'exclusion' (users of social media and online community) and ensure a 'healthy' (effective client-social worker) relationship with the clients. Social workers from Finland, are also a part of international social work. In fact, social work is profession is global. Information technology and online networks, most importantly social media has no boundaries even. In my opinion, social work has a lot to work with the new media tools for its professional development.

In this context, it will be influential for the social work professionals to study deeply the impact of the social media in practical life. It will also direct the service users or clients to understand the situation better. The essence of better service and wellbeing of clients could be important issue to consider for further research. Particularly, service users of clients perspective is also another part to consider. At the same time, it will enrich the profession, if social media is used proper, effective way. Gender perspective of social workers social media connectivity could be very important issue to consider for deeper study. The Nordic aspect of good social work practice through the use of social media is a prospective field to do further research. Because the social welfare policies and social work professional standards and practices have almost similar with those neighboring countries.

In Finland, the need for a specific guideline is necessary for the Finnish social work. Further study can be done in this area to ensure professional standards and practices about the use of social media. It is also a demand for of time, new society to activate the professional practice in the light of technological aspects. At present, digital tools and social media platforms have so many dimensions to reflect social work practices. These are the opportunities and challenges of future.

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## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix: 1**

#### **Forwarding Letter for the online questionnaire**

Dear Social Workers,

My name is Jasim Sarker, studying masters in Comparative Social Work at the University of Lapland. I have chosen my Master's thesis to work with the issue of Social Media & Social Work. The theme is 'Social Workers engagement with the Social Media'. Now the most important part is, to know your valuable thoughts, opinion about the relations of social media with the professional social workers. The questions are recommended for the social workers who have completed their studies and now working as a professional social workers. If you are working as a social worker and also studying you could also share your opinion.

The study will be conducted in English and will be completed during 2014-2015 Academic year. It will be really very kind and honor for me if you could spare few minutes and hopefully respond the questions. All the information provided here will be, only used for this research and as a part of the Thesis.

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire

#### 1. What kind of relation you have to social media as a person

Internet and information- how do you define it?

How much it is important to use IT in everyday life?

Are you a active user of social media?

How significant is to belong in online community?

Do you think that you are somehow dependent on IT and social media?

What kind of information you share in social media?

How much it is necessary to you to follow social media for information?

#### 2. What kind of relation you have to social media as a social worker

What is your opinion about using social media as a social worker?

How often do you use social media during working time?

What image of social workers you see in Internet and social media?

As a social worker how influential it is to use social media?

As a professional social worker is it risky to be in social media, how?

What kind of information you wish to share with public?

What kind of input/output you expect from social media?

Why it is necessary to be active in social media as a professional social worker?

Finnish social workers public image is not good- what do you think?

#### 3. What kind of relation there is between social work and social media?

Why social media became crucial for the social work profession nowadays?

How online community and social media platforms are vital for the social work?

Does the information of changing social phenomenon, discussions in social media affect your work?

Do you feel 'forced' to use social media for the professional purpose?

Do you consider that social workers should be more 'public'? How?

What are the main ethical challenges of the social workers about using social media?



#### **4. How to use social media in social work practice**

How IT could be useful to enhance better services for the clients?

Why the social workers need to be active on social media?

How you evaluate the situation of social workers and the social media in the context of Finland?

How can social worker change/create better public image by using social media?

What are the main things social workers should maintain before using social media?

How social media could be useful to get closer to the client?

What are the major barriers for the social workers to use social media?

Media is always critical about the social workers and portrays negative image, what do you think?

Do you have any special issues/cases you want to share regarding social media and your work?

In which way, citizen's wellbeing could be ensured by the social media